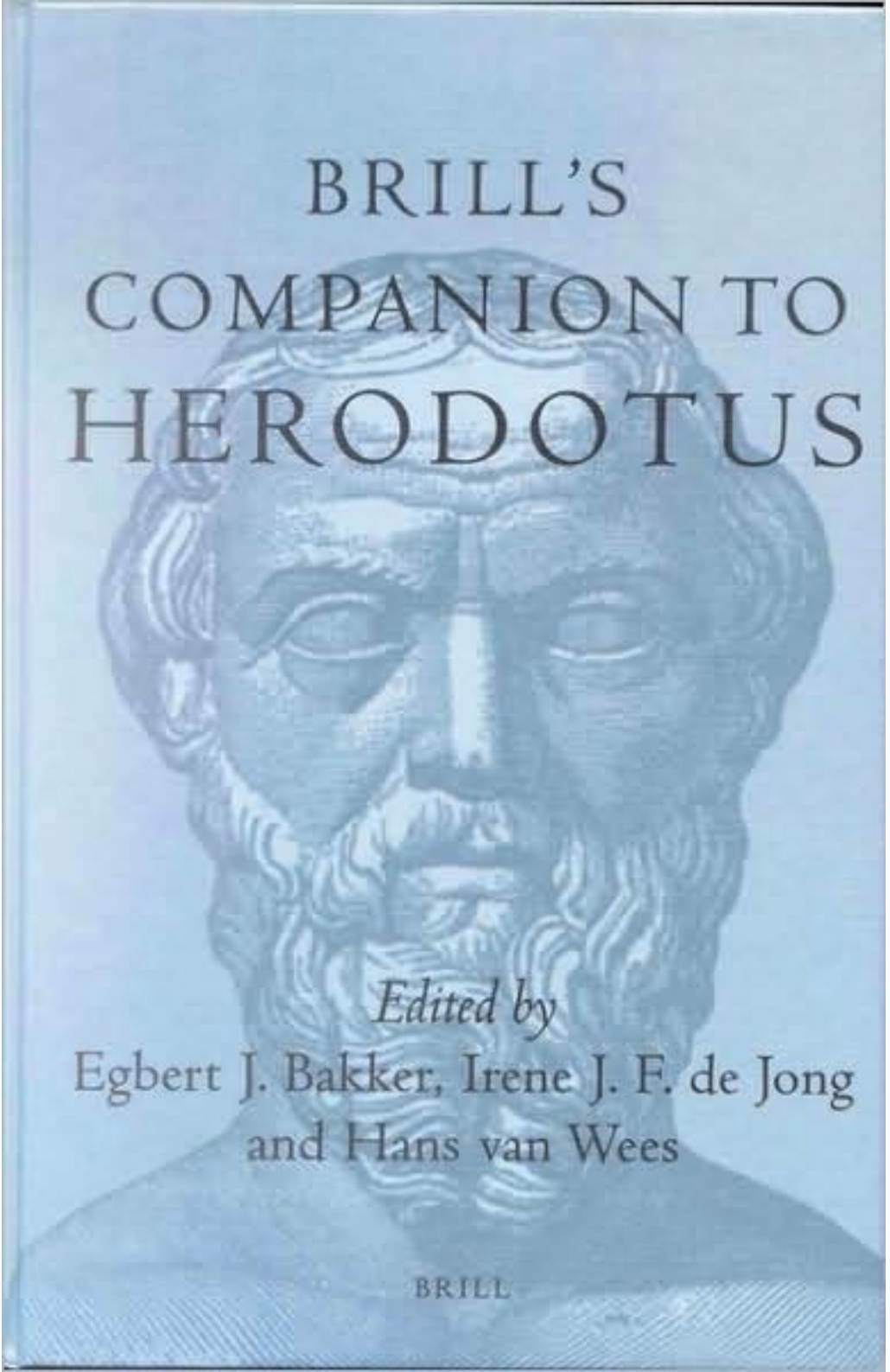
BRILL'S COMPANION TO HERODOTUS



Edited by

Egbert J. Bakker, Irene J. F. de Jong and Hans van Wees

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In memory of
David Asheri
and
Heleen Sancisi

CONTENTS

List of Abbreviations xi

List of Contributors xiii

List of Maps xv

Editors' Introduction xvii
Egbert J. Bakker, Irene J. F. de Jong, Hans van Wees

HERODOTUS AND HIS WORK

1. The Making of History: Herodotus' *Historiēs Apodexis* 3
Egbert J. Bakker

2. Herodotus and Athens 33
John Moles

3. Oral Strategies in the Language of Herodotus 53
Simon R. Slings

4. The *Histories* and Writing 79
Wolfgang Rösler

HERODOTUS AND HIS WORLD

5. Epic Heritage and Mythical Patterns in Herodotus 97
Deborah Boedeker

6. Herodotus and Tragedy 117
Suzanne Saïd

7. Philosophy, Science, Politics: Herodotus and the Intellectual Trends of his Time 149
Kurt A. Raaflaub

8. Religion in Herodotus 187
Jon D. Mikalson

9. Popular Morality in Herodotus 199
Nick Fisher

10. Women in Herodotus' *Histories* 225
Josine Blok

THE *HISTORIES* AS NARRATIVE

11. Narrative Unity and Units 245
Irene J. F. de Jong

12. 'I didn't give my own genealogy': Herodotus and the authorial persona 267
Carolyn Dewald

13. Short Stories in Herodotus' *Histories* 291
Vivienne Gray

THE HISTORICAL METHOD

14. Herodotus and the Past 321
Hans van Wees

15. Herodotus as a Critic: Truth, Fiction, Polarity 351
Paul Cartledge and Emily Greenwood

16. Herodotus and his Sources of Information 373
Simon Hornblower

17. The Organization of Time in the *Histories* 387
Justus Cobet

HISTORY AND ETHNOGRAPHY

18. Egypt 415
Alan B. Lloyd

19. Scythians 437
Stephanie West

20. The Ethnography of the Fringes 457
Klaus Karttunen

21. Babylon 475
Amélie Kuhrt

22. Archaic Greek History 497
Robin Osborne

23. Greek History, *c.* 525–480 BC 521
Sara Forsdyke

24. The Persian Invasions 551
Thomas Harrison

25. The Personality of Xerxes, King of Kings 579
Heleen Sancisi-Weerdenburg

Bibliography 591

General Index 629

Index of Passages 641

ABBREVIATIONS

AchHist	*Achaemenid History*
D-K	H. Diels and W. Kranz, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, 10th ed. (= VS)
FGrH	F. Jacoby, *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*
Fornara	C. W. Fornara, *Archaic Times to the End of the Peloponnesian War*, 2nd ed.
IG	*Inscriptiones Graecae*
K-A	R. Kassel and C. Austin, *Poetae Comici Graeci*
KRS	G. S. Kirk, J. E. Raven and M. Schofield, *The Presocratic Philosophers*, 2nd. ed.
L-P	*E. Lobel and D.L. Page, Poetarum Lesbiorum Fragmenta*
LSJ	H. G. Liddell, R. Scott, and H. S. Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 9th edition.
ML	R. Meiggs and D. Lewis, *A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions*, revised ed.
SEG	*Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*
Syll./SIG	W. Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*, 3rd ed.
Tod	M. N. Tod, *A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions*
VS	H. Diels and W. Kranz, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, 10th ed. (= D-K).

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LIST OF MAPS

Egypt 416

Scythia 438

The world according to Herodotus 458

Babylon 476

Greece 498

The Persian Empire 552

EDITORS' INTRODUCTION

Egbert J. Bakker, Irene J. F. de Jong, Hans van Wees

'As one must beware of the beetle in the rosebush, so must one beware of the slander and gossip lurking under its pleasant and gentle surface', said Plutarch of Herodotus' *Histories* (*On the Malice of Herodotus* 43). Plutarch was not the first or the last to appreciate Herodotus' literary qualities but question his merits as a historian and ethnographer. In a more sympathetic but no less critical spirit, this *Companion to Herodotus* seeks to illuminate both sides of his work. The following chapters fully reflect the rich, complicated, and sometimes controversial nature of the *Histories*. Sometimes they are in disagreement with one another, testifying to Herodotus' ever enigmatic position at the beginning of historiography, as well as to his own avowed intention not to provide easy solutions, but to let the reader choose from the alternatives he has assembled in his *historiē*. Often, chapters overlap, showing the extent to which many of the issues which Herodotus raises are part of an intricately woven network of themes, reflecting a consistent view of the world and its history.

The opening chapters examine the nature of Herodotus' work and its place within the oral and literary traditions of the late fifth century BC. Egbert Bakker begins by addressing the questions raised by Herodotus' famous opening sentence, in particular the meaning of the terms *historiē* and *apodexis*. He concludes that rather than referring to the publication of the work, the term *apodexis* presents the work as a lasting achievement and at the same time as a potentially controversial statement. John Moles proceeds to modify the widespread idea that one purpose of the *Histories* was to praise Athens. Herodotus acknowledged this city's important role when the freedom of Greece was at stake, but he implicitly and subtly suggested that the Athenian empire of his own day resembled the tyrannical and oriental empires of the past, and in doing so hoped to alert the Athenians to the dangers inherent in their present behaviour. In the next chapter, Simon Slings addresses the problem of the style of the *Histories*. He argues that Herodotus' language is characterized throughout by 'oral strategies', which can at times also be put to

rhetorical effect. The complementary thesis of Wolfgang Rösler is that it was the spread of written texts in the second half of the fifth century BC which inspired Herodotus to write down, at the end of his life, all the material which he had collected. An important sign that the *Histories* are directed at readers rather than listeners is Herodotus' frequent use of the past tense when referring to his own time, thereby adopting the perspective of future readers of his book.

The next six chapters broaden out into an investigation of the range of contemporary influences—literary, intellectual, religious, moral, and social—which helped shape Herodotus' work. Deborah Boedeker reviews the ways in which Herodotus' narrative is shaped by the legacy of the epic past and by general patterns of mythic storytelling. Such a shaping, she stresses, is never involuntary, and Herodotus is no less creating a voice for himself than he is following the story patterns from the past. Suzanne Saïd's contribution critically evaluates the claims made by scholars regarding the tragic nature of the *Histories*. Working through the verbal echoes, literary techniques, themes, 'tragic' episodes (such as the stories of Croesus, Polycrates, and Cypselus), and above all the account of the battle of Salamis, she arrives at the conclusion that the differences between the *Histories* and tragedy are greater and more important than the similarities. Kurt Raaflaub proceeds with an analysis of the intellectual context in which the *Histories* were created. The Herodotus that emerges from his discussion not only participates fully in the contemporary debates on politics and science, but is also closer to Thucydides than is commonly supposed. Next, Jon Mikalson discusses the religious dimension of the *Histories*, stressing the importance of popular religion and local cult (rather than Olympian religion as presented in Panhellenic poetry) in Herodotus' dealing with the divine. In his chapter, Nick Fisher argues that Herodotus is clearly interested in exploring major moral issues, such as divine punishment for injustice, excessive revenge or overconfidence in prosperity, and the contrast between tyrannical and luxurious Eastern Empires and freedom-loving, modestly living Greeks. There is no worked-out system, however, but rather a flexible set of interconnected themes, hints, and explanations, which are delivered in speeches, in narratorial comments, and by the thematic organization of the material. The remarkably central role played by women in the *Histories* forms the subject of Josine Blok's chapter. Is their importance an echo of historical reality or is it the result of Herodotus' storytelling imagi-

nation? Both views have found their defenders. Blok offers the suggestion that it might be Herodotus' tendency to view the *polis* in terms of an *oikos* which opened his eyes to the mutual dependence of men and women.

Herodotus' much-admired skill as a storyteller is analysed in the next three chapters. First, Irene de Jong discusses the many attempts to defend the unity of the *Histories*, and suggests that the structure of this text is best understood in terms of the narratological concept of 'time': analysing 'digressions' in terms of analepses and prolepses helps to understand their place and function within the story as a whole. Some of the conventional labels for the smaller units within the *Histories*—*Exkurs*, *novella*—are best banned from Herodotean scholarship. Carolyn Dewald continues the survey of Herodotus' narrative by concentrating on the ways in which Herodotus' authorial voice is expressed and represented; she proposes a distinction between two 'voices', that of a narrator and of a '*histōr*', each with a specific function in the text. One kind of smaller unit within the *Histories*, the short story, is the subject of Vivienne Gray's contribution. She shows that these stories often display the same narrative patterns, and that, even if the link between them and the main story is not always clear at first sight (hence the older idea of Herodotus randomly inserting 'digressions'), there often is a connection in the form of analogy.

The second half of the volume tackles Herodotus as a researcher—historian, ethnographer, geographer, and general critic. Hans van Wees assesses Herodotus in the role for which he is most famous, Father of History, highlighting the ambitious scope of his universal history and the sophistication and originality of his treatment of origins, the rise and fall of empires, and the causes of war. Emily Greenwood and Paul Cartledge then investigate Herodotus' critical methods and his remarkable self-presentation as a critic, which set him apart from most ancient historians, as well as one of his guiding principles of interpretation, polarity. Two key aspects of the historical method are explored by Simon Hornblower, who discusses the nature of Herodotus' sources and his handling of them, long a controversial question, and by Justus Cobet, who investigates the no less vital and controversial issue of Herodotus' interest in, and handling of, matters of chronology.

All these general themes are picked up again in a series of detailed studies of aspects of the *Histories*, beginning with four chapters on

the history and ethnography of 'barbarian' peoples. Alan B. Lloyd and Stephanie West scrutinize the two major accounts of non-Greek nations, covering Egyptians and Scythians, respectively, while Klaus Karttunen investigates Herodotus' ethnography of the more remote parts of the world, and Amélie Kuhrt presents a particularly in-depth study of Herodotus' account of Babylon, a small but important part of the *Histories*. Each chapter explains the pattern and rationale of Herodotus' ethnography with the aid of archaeological and other evidence which helps assess the reliability of his often sensational reports.

The final four chapters turn to the history of Greece and the Persian Wars. Robin Osborne deals with the earliest material concerning Greece, from the heroic age to the late sixth century BC, while Sara Forsdyke discusses the increasingly abundant information relating to the period from *c.* 525 BC to the Persian Wars, a time within living memory when Herodotus began his work. Both pay particular attention to the ways in which the *Histories* shaped, and were shaped by, their sources. The structure, thematic significance, and historical accuracy of the culminating account of the Persian invasions of Greece is analysed by Thomas Harrison, and just as the section on barbarian nations ends with an especially detailed case-study, so this section concludes with a re-publication of Heleen Sancisi's close investigation of the main actor in Herodotus' story of the Persian Wars, King Xerxes.

These last two chapters replace planned contributions by David Asheri on the Persian Wars and by Heleen Sancisi on the Persians. The untimely death of these two great scholars sadly deprives us of their work, and this volume is dedicated to their memory.

* * *

The editors wish to thank Ms Linda Woodward for her expert work on the editing of the manuscript and Ms Mélanie Fortin (Université de Montréal) for her help in compiling the bibliography. Egbert Bakker gratefully acknowledges support for his part in the project from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada as well as from the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton and the Alexander S. Onassis Public Benefit Foundation in Athens.

HERODOTUS AND HIS WORK

CHAPTER ONE

THE MAKING OF HISTORY: HERODOTUS' *HISTORIĒS APODEXIS*

Egbert J. Bakker

> Action, in so far as it engages in founding and preserving political bodies, creates the condition for remembrance, that is; for history.
> Hannah Arend, *The Human Condition*

Most readers of Herodotus' work call it *History*, or the *Histories*. The name is doubly motivated. Not only does it follow Herodotus himself in the way in which he refers to his own literary and intellectual achievement; it also views Herodotus through the tradition of which we have made him the 'father'. As the term *historia* (or *historiē* as Herodotus would have pronounced it) comes closer to us on its long way from the fifth century BCE through Greek Antiquity, it becomes more and more closely associated with writing, as appears from its joining with the verbal root *graph*, to form such composite concepts as *historiographos* or *historiographia*. Such 'writing of history', however, is quite alien to Herodotus' understanding of *historiē*. 'History' for him is not an object of study, something you write, or write about; it is an intellectual tool and a communicative activity. The essential link for him is not with *graph* but with another verbal idea, as appears from the most famous mention of *historiē* in history, in the Proem to Herodotus' *Histories*:[1]

> Ἡροδότου Ἁλικαρνησσέος ἱστορίης ἀπόδεξις ἥδε, ὡς μήτε τὰ γενόμενα ἐξ ἀνθρώπων τῷ χρόνῳ ἐξίτηλα γένηται, μήτε ἔργα μεγάλα τε καὶ θωμαστά, τὰ μὲν Ἕλλησι, τὰ δὲ βαρβάροισι ἀποδεχθέντα, ἀκλεᾶ γένηται, τά τε ἄλλα καὶ δι' ἣν αἰτίην ἐπολέμησαν ἀλλήλοισι.
>
> This is the *apodexis* of the *historiē* of Herodotus of Halicarnassus, put forth to prevent what has been made to happen by men from fading

[1] Translations of passages from Herodotus in this chapter are my own.

> with time, and (to prevent) great and marvellous deeds, some accomplished by Greeks, others by barbarians, from losing fame, and in particular through what *aitiē* they came to war with each other.

There are blanks left in the translation: this chapter, in dealing with Herodotus' *historiē* as the prehistory of our notion of 'history', does not want to take too much for granted. So we will make the meaning not only of *historiē*, but also of *apodexis*, the object of investigation. The latter term is the action noun of the verbal idea *apo-deik*, which will concern us in particular. Our main source of information will be the evidence that Herodotus' *Histories* provides itself as it has come down to us through the ages. And the first evidence we have to face is the interpretation of the Proem as the primary context of *historiēs apodexis*.

Herodotus' first sentence, to begin with, seems to lack precision in the way in which it delimits the work's subject. While Thucydides tells us exactly that his subject is the Peloponnesian War, and that he started working on it from its very beginning, Herodotus does not tell us that the subject of his work is the Persian Wars. What he indicates is at the same time much broader than that subject—*erga megala* 'great accomplishments', for example, can be understood as including 'monuments', 'architectural achievements'—and narrower: according to the wording of the Proem, his *historiē* will concern not so much the war itself as its *aitiē*, another term, usually translated as 'cause', whose interpretation is at stake.

Nor does the narrative itself seem to do much to remedy the problem. Its long 'digressions' and varied subject matter have prompted various hypotheses concerning the unity and publication of the work, each betraying in its own way the preconceptions of the time. The lack of a clear focus on a well-defined subject has been explained as due to genetic factors. The work as we have it was seen as showing signs of an intellectual development by which Herodotus passed through various stages, from the travelling geographer and ethnographer who wrote the Egyptian *logos* that is now our Book Two, to the historian who left us Books Seven through Nine, and who, it was thought, had made much progress toward the Thucydidean ideal of the objective historian.[2] The tension between history and geog-

[2] Most authoritatively Jacoby (1913) 275 ff.; cf. De Sanctis (1926), Powell (1939), Latte (1958) 7 ('Er hat nicht als Historiker begonnen, sondern ist es geworden');

raphy, between the present and the past, was resolved through the history of the work itself.

This 'analytic' standpoint provoked, on the analogy of the Homeric Question, a 'Unitarian' reaction on the part of scholars who viewed Herodotus' work as historical *ab ovo*: for them, geography and ethnography are part of the overall historiographical conception of the *Histories*.[3] The ensuing 'unity' was not unproblematic, and often it was necessary to depict Herodotus as somehow incapable, or, rather, 'not yet' capable of making the distinctions and decisions that are normal for historiography as we understand it, or to impose on himself the kind of limitations we associate with purposeful writing. A variant version of this idea presents us a Herodotus who *is* capable of those things, but who is hampered by the constraints of an 'archaic', paratactic way of expression (Immerwahr (1966) 7). In more recent times, 'archaic style' and its associated concepts has come to be replaced by 'orality',[4] and the supposed lack of focus in Herodotus' choice of subject matter is seen as simply due to the fact that the intellectual context in which he wrote was 'predisciplinary', unfamiliar with the modern boundaries between geography, anthropology, and history.[5]

In all these cases, the implicit question seems to be whether Herodotus was the first historian, a good or bad historian, merely a historian *avant la lettre*, or a historian at all. Herodotus is set against some modern notion of 'history', a norm to which he either conforms only in the course of his intellectual development, or not (yet) quite, in some way or another. In part, the modern reception of Herodotus has been the search for attenuating circumstances. It is only in the most recent research that the terms 'historian' or 'history' have come to be charged with cultural weight. The Herodotus that emerges is viewed in a way that entirely suppresses any modern notion of 'history'—not without new controversy, as we shall see.

Fornara (1971a); an analytic reading of Herodotus' first sentence itself is offered in Hommel (1981).

[3] E.g., Regenbogen (1930b); Pohlenz (1937), Immerwahr (1966), Cobet (1971), Drexler (1972). For the problem of unity in the *Histories*, see de Jong, this volume (Ch. 11).

[4] E.g., Lang (1984); on 'oral strategies' in Herodotus, see also Slings, this volume (Ch. 3).

[5] Evans (1991) 3, Thomas (2000) 161 ff. See also the problem of Herodotus' 'reliability' as discussed by Cartledge and Greenwood in this volume (Ch. 15).

Interpreting the Proem

Any attempt to understand Herodotus' notion of 'history' must start from Herodotus' own use of the term *historiē* in the Proem, to which we now return. At stake is not only the term's lexical value, but also the way it functions in the syntax of the Proem. This rich sentence is best taken as a tripartite structure, beginning with a phrase characterizing the work as a whole, and inscribing the name of its author in it (1), followed by two negative purpose clauses of parallel structure in which the work's intended achievements are specified (2a and b), and rounded off with an indirect question that has at first sight an unclear relation to what precedes (3). Following the analysis of Tilman Krischer, we can present the construction as follows:[6]

1. Ἡροδότου Ἁλικαρνησσέος ἱστορίης ἀπόδεξις ἥδε,

2. ὡς **a)** μήτε (α) τὰ γενόμενα
(β) ἐξ ἀνθρώπων
(γ) τῷ χρόνῳ ἐξίτηλα γένηται,
b) μήτε (α) ἔργα μεγάλα τε καὶ θωμαστά,
(β) τὰ μὲν Ἕλλησι, τὰ δὲ βαρβάροισι ἀποδεχθέντα,
(γ) ἀκλεᾶ γένηται,

3. τά τε ἄλλα καὶ δί ἣν αἰτίην ἐπολέμησαν ἀλλήλοισι.

Krischer has pointed out that the problematic final *colon* (3) is best explained when we assume that Herodotus' proem is modelled in its syntactic articulation on a typical epic Proem. The last clause, 3 in the presentation above, reaches back to the first clause, thus complementing it and ensuring the coherence of the Proem.[7] Furthermore,

[6] Krischer (1965) 159–60; cf. Nagy (1990) 217, the latter analysing colon 3 as an indirect question; cf. Erbse (1956) 215, who analyses it as a relative clause (see also Lang (1987) 204); critical grammatical discussion in Drexler (1972) 3–11. A different articulation of the sentence is presented in Hommel (1981) 277 ff. Erbse (1992) 123–5 reviews the scholarship on the Proem, rightly pointing out that any attempt to see the Proem as announcing the *content* of the *Histories* is likely to create confusion.

[7] Compare the proem of the *Iliad*, where l. 6 ἐξ οὗ δὴ τὰ πρῶτα διαστήτην ἐρίσαντε 'from the moment at which they stood first apart in quarrel' picks up μῆνιν ἄειδε, θεά of the first line. See Krischer (1965) 162; Nagy (1990) 220–1 n. 34; on Homer specifically, see Bakker (1997c) 293. Krischer notes that the indication of Herodotus'

just as in epic, the final clause of the proem provides the link with the beginning of the narrative proper: it contains the word *aitiēn* 'cause', which is picked up in the first sentence beyond the proem in the form of *aitious* 'guilty', 'responsible':[8]

> Περσέων μέν νυν οἱ λόγιοι Φοίνικας αἰτίους φασὶ γενέσθαι τῆς διαφορῆς· (1.1.1)
>
> Now the chroniclers of the Persians claim that the Phoenicians have been responsible for the conflict (lit: 'difference').

Beyond syntax and stylistics, the important semantic and conceptual consequence of Krischer's analysis is that the semantic nuclei of the first and last clause, *historiēs apodexis* and *aitiēn*, are connected with each other: Herodotus' project is the *historiē* of an *aitiē*, whatever sense we will attribute to these terms in the final analysis.[9] A further Homeric echo can be detected in the *cola* (α) and (γ) of 2b: great deeds and their connection with *kleos*. This important detail will concern us later on.

But if the Homeric reminiscence is unmistakable, so is the parallel with more contemporary stylistics. The two purpose clauses in the middle (2a–b), with their symmetrical internal structure (isocolon) and their identical closing sounds (homoioteleuton), conform to the style that had become popular in sophistic contemporary rhetoric, mainly due to the Sicilian orator Gorgias.[10]

Herodotus' Proem, then, displays a curious mixture of old and new. We may ask whether this co-existence of epic and sophistic elements is confined to stylistics or extends into thought and *mentalité* as well. The latter possibility is rejected by Krischer ((1965) 165),

name and the characterization of his work functionally occupies the slot of the invocation of the Muse(s) in the traditional epic proem (on the relation between ἱστορίη and the Muses, see pages 27–28 below). Doubts as to the epic connotations of Herodotus' syntax in Hommel (1981) 281 n. 44, who analyses (pp. 284–7) the final colon as a later addition, an editorial intervention on Herodotus' part to make the Proem reflect the new historical turn the work has taken in the course of its development.

[8] Krischer (1965) 160, Nagy (1987) 180; cf. Lateiner (1989) 15. The first epic parallel is the proem of the *Iliad*, in which the phrase διαστήτην ἐρίσαντε 'the two of them stood away from each other quarrelling' in line 6 is picked up by ἔριδι 'in quarrel' (8) in the beginning of the narrative.

[9] For a different interpretation of the Proem, and of αἰτίη in particular, see van Wees, this volume (Ch. 14) p. 321.

[10] Kennedy (1963) 64–5; on the influence of sophistic rhetoric on Herodotus' style, see Jacoby (1913) 333; Aly (1921) 286–96; general remarks in Lateiner (1989) 19.

who holds that the epic parallel testifies to Herodotus' acknowledging epic as a stylistic and literary model, not his continuing the Homeric tradition of conferring *kleos* to the heroes of the past. Yet the position of Herodotus between the poetic tradition of the past and the intellectual developments of the present is by no means clear. In particular the meaning of the crucial phrase *historiēs apodexis* has recently become the center of a controversy that fully confirms Herodotus' enigmatic status.

Historiēs apodexis is usually rendered with such expressions as 'publication of research' or 'public exposition of an inquiry'.[11] It remains to be seen, however, whether these translations are of much help. 'Publication' is no less a culturally determined concept than is 'history' or 'research', and we may ask what it might have meant for Herodotus' work to have been 'published' in its original intellectual context. The notion of publication, in fact, becomes increasingly important in recent research, suggesting that the old controversy between the analytic and the unitarian approach has never been really resolved. Exactly *what* is being 'published' according to this phrase: an ethnographical core or the work as we have it? And what does 'published' mean? Does *apodexis* apply to the work as a whole or to the oral delivery of its parts? Some scholars have recently endorsed the latter possibility, arguing that 'publication' is an anachronistic concept that does not capture the reality of the reception of Herodotus' '*Inquiry*' by its original public. Rather, they argue, we must think of 'prepublication' of 'work in progress' in the form of lectures.[12]

The idea of Herodotus presenting his work orally, for which there

[11] E.g., 'performance [literally, 'display'] of the enquiries' (Gould (1989) 17); 'demonstration of his research' (Lateiner (1989) 7); 'public presentation' (Nagy (1990) 217); 'exposer son enquête' (Payen (1997) 82). Ἀπόδεξις, the Ionian form for ἀπόδειξις, is just as ἐπίδειξις (ἐπίδεξις) a *nomen actionis* derived from the verbal root δεικ- 'show', 'display', 'point'. In Herodotus' Ionian, another verbal root, δεκ- (for Attic δεχ-) 'receive', 'accept', yields in principle the same form (cf. ἐκδεξιν (Hdt. 7.3.3)); aorist forms of either verb are also identical: (ἀπ)εδέξατο from (ἀπο)δείκνυσθαι and (ἐξ)εδέξατο from (ἐξ)δέχομαι). Some scholars (most recently Rosén (1993)) actually go so far as to view ἀπόδεξις as a form of ἀπο-δέκομαι, which would turn Herodotus into a receiver of established tradition, rather than one who expounds original, individual research. See Erbse's (1995) reaction. Nagy (1987) 176 n. 3 speaks of a 'conflation' of the two verbs. See also the comments by Lang (1987) 203 and Nagy's reply ((1987) 209).

[12] Evans (1991) 90, 99–100, Thomas (1992) 125–6; (1993); (2000) 257–60 (see further below).

is some ancient anecdotal evidence,[13] has been entertained in particular by Rosalind Thomas, who has sought to locate Herodotus' work in the world of early scientific discourse as is evidenced by the mode of presentation of many of the treatises in the Hippocratic corpus. Herodotus' work, especially the Egyptian *logos*, she argues, displays the same agonistic and combative tone that G. E. R. Lloyd signals in the early Hippocratic writers and that must go back to sessions at which knowledge was transmitted, and contested, orally.[14]

Thomas' notion of the publication of Herodotean *historiē* envisages oral presentation and reception of ideas, while explicitly allowing for the existence of written texts. Such a blend of the spoken and the written is the realm of rhetorical *epideixis*. According to a recent account, this term denotes 'the displaying or revealing (orally) of what was already in existence beforehand'—that is, the discourse written.[15] This idea of 'display' is for Thomas very close to Herodotus' *apode(i)xis*, which she conceives of as the kind of proof characteristic of the sophistic and rhetorical milieu of the end of the fifth century: the emphatic assertion and demonstration of one's own *historiē* 'research' conducted in competition with others. One of the treatises in the Hippocratic corpus opens in fact in a particularly suggestive way from the point of view of Herodotus' Proem:[16]

> Εἰσί τινες οἳ τέχνην πεποίηνται τὸ τὰς τέχνας αἰσχροεπεῖν, ὡς μὲν οἴονται οἱ τοῦτο διαπρησσόμενοι, οὐχ ὃ ἐγὼ λέγω, ἀλλ' ἱστορίης οἰκείης ἐπίδειξιν ποιεύμενοι. (Hipp. *De arte* 1)
>
> Some there are who have made an art of vilifying the arts, though they consider, not that they are accomplishing the object I mention, but that they are making a display of their own knowledge.

For Thomas, the parallelism between *historiēs* . . . *epideixin* here and Herodotus' own *historiēs apodexis* 'provides the most vivid suggestion that Herodotus' opening sentence had contemporary connotations within the contemporary quest for knowledge. It also implies that the ideas of proof and demonstration might rapidly imply or shade into display, and then into the display lecture. Herodotus seems then, in his very first sentence, to be using the fashionable language of

[13] E.g., Lucian, *Herodotus* 1 (on Herodotus performing at the Olympic Games). Cf. Pohlenz (1937) 208, Powell (1939) 32 ff.; critical discussion in Johnson (1994).
[14] Thomas (1993); (2000) 249 ff.; Lloyd (1979) 86–98; see also Hornblower (1987) 20.
[15] Cole (1991) 89.
[16] Tr. Jones (1923) 191.

the time, language which had precise connotations in a period where, increasingly, any display of erudition and knowledge could be made in an oral presentation, an *epideixis*'.[17]

It remains to be seen, however, whether the preverbs *apo-* and *epi-* are so easily interchangeable; but before we turn to that question, we need to address an alternative modern approach, rejected by Thomas, which seeks to situate Herodotus' project, not in contemporary scientific thought, but within the perspective of the general Greek preoccupation with the past. Herodotus in this perspective, put forward by Gregory Nagy in particular, is not so much a scientist as a *logios*, a master of prose narrative, whose function it is, along with the *aoidos*, the epic poet, to confer *kleos*. Nagy characterizes Herodotus' work as 'the product of conventions in an oral tradition of prose'.[18] In this account, *apodexis* is not 'proof' or 'display', nor a one-time event, a display lecture or *epideixis*, but a 'public presentation', a performance, a link in a chain of transmission starting with the events in the past and ending with the public exposition of Herodotus' *historiē*.

The Proem, in fact, invites us to pay more attention to Herodotus' interest in the past than Thomas would allow. There is a concern with *kleos*, expressed in the two parallel negative purpose clauses, whether or not we consider that concern to be epic in mentality. The second of those two clauses (2b, β), furthermore, contains a second occurrence of the verbal idea *apo-deik*. The crucial attribute of the 'great and wondrous deeds of Greeks and barbarians', whose *kleos* should not be lost, is that they are *apodekhthenta*, which Nagy translates as 'performed'.[19] For Nagy, there is a relation between the achievements of the past and Herodotus' *apodexis* in the present: 'performing a deed is the equivalence of publicly displaying a deed because it is ultimately being publicly displayed by the *History* of Herodotus'.[20] *Apodexis*, then, according to Nagy, is the proclamation of *kleos* in an ongoing oral tradition, as against the insistence on

[17] Thomas (2000) 262–3; cf. (1993) 242–43.

[18] Nagy (1987) 175; (1990) 224, arguing on the basis of a parallelism of λόγιος (glossed as 'masters of speech', *ibid.* 223) and ἀοιδός. See also Hartog (1991) 285 (English tr. p. 276), referring to Havelock (1963) 53–4 n. 8.

[19] Nagy (1987) 178.

[20] Ibid.; see also Erbse (1956) 211, who stresses the parallelism of ἱστορίης ἀπόδεξις and ἔργων ἀπόδεξις, on which, see further below, pages 24–28.

proof, display, and personal achievement that is inherent in Thomas' account of the term.

Herodotus could hardly have been pulled in two more different directions. Against Thomas' modern scientific Herodotus, firmly rooted in contemporary intellectual debate, we have Nagy's conception of a prose storyteller who subsumes the preceding epic tradition. The term *apodexis* is crucial for either position, but neither 'proof/display' nor 'public performance' exhausts its semantics, as we will see. In fact, both positions leave aspects of the term unexplored that make possible a more integrative interpretation, yielding a Herodotus whose 'proof' in the present, is not incompatible with his rendering of the past.

Yet in spite of the apparent difference between Thomas' and Nagy's positions there is agreement in that both take *apodexis* to refer to the oral delivery of Herodotus' work, and in this they are not alone among modern authors.[21] As we begin to understand more of the composition, publication, reception, and transmission of discourses in times other than our own, to say that there is an 'oral' component to prose works of the fifth and fourth centuries comes close to being a truism. True, for Herodotus' work in particular we can be more specific and the case for at least an oral reception is easier than in the case of Thucydides or Xenophon.[22] As Thomas notes herself, Herodotus' own voice is abundantly present in the form of the grammatical first person, most often in the ethnographical passages, but not infrequently in the narrative sections as well.[23] There is a constant concern with the marking of the beginning and end of sections, and on numerous occasions Herodotus refers back to what precedes, using the 'real time' temporal adverbs *proteron* 'earlier' and

[21] E.g., Gould (1989) 17; Evans (1991) 3; Hartog (1991) 285; assessment of the 'orality' of the term in Moles (1999) sect. 8. It is worth pointing out that this whole discussion (including the controversy between Nagy and Thomas) suffers from a fundamental and persistent ambiguity in the use of the term 'oral', in that it refers both to the 'mentality' or 'conception' of a discourse ('oral' vs. 'literate') and to its mode of presentation ('oral' vs. 'written'). For discussion, see Bakker (1999a) 29–37.

[22] See, e.g., Pohlenz (1937) 208–10; Lang (1984); Munson (1993).

[23] Thomas (1993) 240–1; Dewald (1987) 150 as well as Ch. 12 in this volume. Thomas uses the first-person verbs as an argument against the idea of the 'oral storyteller', who she thinks is much less present in the text. Signs of speaking in Homer, however, may be less straightforward, but they are unmistakable once noticed; see Bakker (1997a). Against Thomas' and Dewald's stance with regard to the first person in the *Histories*, see Svenbro (1993) 150, who approaches the first person in Herodotus and other historians as a necessary 'fiction'.

husteron 'later', the same adverbs that are also used for the temporal relationships between the events recounted in the narrative.[24] We are surely entitled to infer from these apparent attempts at monitoring the information flow that Herodotus is working hard, noticeably, to facilitate the reception of his work to a listening public.[25]

But all this is not our point. The question is whether the idea of the oral delivery of *logoi* is expressed *as such* by the noun *apodexis*. Does Herodotus refer in the opening words of what must be the published, ostensibly written version of his work, to its oral delivery? Or if that work *is*, as an integrated whole, meant to be orally delivered after all, would not a reference to its own, oral, mode of presentation be redundant? If *apodexis* merely refers to the medium of presentation, why is the term present at all, and did not Herodotus simply call his work '*historiē*'? The second occurrence of the verbal idea *apodeik-* in the proem may help us realize that there is more to *apodexis* than what meets the eye at first sight, and that *historiēs apodexis* is a phrase consisting of two key terms in Herodotus' intellectual and conceptual vocabulary. It also invites us to study Herodotus' own use of those terms in some detail, and to bring that internal evidence to bear on the interpretation of the proem. A survey of Herodotus' own use of the nouns *historiē* and *apodexis* and the verbs *historeein* and *apodexasthai* reveals that *historiēs apodexis*, far from being a mere title or a characterization of the 'medial' aspects of the work, is a bold, even provocative, expression stating nothing less than the communicative purpose and ambition of Herodotus' work. What it says was apparently new and not obvious, and sufficiently marked for the subsequent historiographical tradition to avoid it studiously.[26] In the following sections, we will first deal with *historiē* and then with *apodexis*; a picture will emerge in which these terms are not only two

[24] On beginning and end of sections, see Immerwahr (1966) 52–8; Dewald (1987) 164–5. The importance of the particles μὲν δὴ . . . δέ in this process is demonstrated in Bakker (1993). On pointing backward and ahead, see also de Jong, this volume (Ch. 11) pp. 259–263.

[25] Three times a forward cross-reference remains unfulfilled. It is to be noted that in these cases Herodotus does not use ὕστερον (2.101.2, referring to 2.149.1), but an explicit mention of λόγοι (1.106.2 ἐν ἑτέροισι λόγοισι, on the fall of Nineveh; 1.184 ἐν τοῖσι Ἀσσυρίοισι λόγοισι, on the Babylonian kings; 7.213 ἐν τοῖσι ὄπισθε λόγοισι, on the death of the traitor Ephialtes). Are these references to parts of the work that were never written or to lectures that were never incorporated in the final redaction? Cf. Nagy (1990) 235 n. 91. See also Rösler, this volume (Ch. 4, note 17) and Cobet (Ch. 17, note 40).

[26] Hornblower (1987) 8–11. But see pages 31–32 at the end of this chapter.

constituents of a famous syntagm, but also two interrelated concepts, whose semantics, and pragmatics, blend to form a unified whole.

Historiē: *Interrogation and Difference*

The abstract noun *historiē* as well as the verb *historeō* are etymologically related to the verbal root *wid-/weid-/woid-* 'see', 'know'. This might yield the idea of gathering knowledge through actual perception, autopsy, as the central meaning of *historiē*.[27] Such a meaning would seem to be in concordance with the idea of Herodotus the critical researcher that has recently been proposed by Thomas, as we saw. Her understanding of *historiē* presents us with a Herodotus who is not sifting traditions and probing the past, but investigating natural phenomena in the present, such as the nature of the mysterious Nile.[28] Again we may contrast Thomas' views with those of Nagy, who sees in *historiē* an essentially juridical concept: the investigation of the cause of the war between Greeks and barbarians.[29] This highlights the relation between *historiē* and *aitiē*, which, as we saw, is something the syntactic articulation of the Proem invites us to do.

This relation is, in fact, more significant than is commonly supposed, since Herodotus is not the only contemporary writer to present his *historiē* in this way. We can observe that in early medical and scientific writings there is a mutual expectancy between *historia* and *aitia*. The author of the Hippocratic treatise *On Ancient Medicine*, for example, states that knowledge about 'nature' (*phusis*) is impossible without knowledge of man, and that the latter involves '*historiē* to know (*eidenai*) what man is and through what cause (*di' hoias aitias*) he comes to be what he is' (ch. 20). Similarly, Socrates in the *Phaedo* (96a) tells that in his youth he had a passion for 'natural science' (*peri phuseōs historian*) which he specifies as 'knowing (*eidenai*) the causes (*aitias*) of each thing'. In the scientific treatises of Aristotle, especially those dealing with 'natural history', the connection between *historia* and *aitia* is also well attested.[30] Apparently, *historiē* is

[27] Snell (1924) 59–71, Nagy (1990) 250, Dewald (1987) 153 n. 18; Darbo-Peschanski (1987) 184 ('recherche sur le terrain'); Thomas (2000) 164.

[28] Thomas (2000) 161–7.

[29] Nagy (1990) 259–62.

[30] E.g., *De Caelo* 298b2; *Hist. an.* 491a11–12; *Incessu an.* 704b7–11; *Part. an.* 646a8–12; 696b14–17.

not for Herodotus alone the search for what 'causes' the subject of investigation.[31]

The difference between the natural historians and Herodotus the historian is that for the latter *aitiē* is not a matter of nature or the human body but of human behaviour (we recall the *ta genomena ex anthrōpōn* of the Proem). And so the 'cause' of the researcher's object of study does take on the sense of 'guilt' or 'responsibility'. In fact, the agent noun from which *historiē* morphologically derives, *histōr* (or *istōr*), is used in that very semantic sphere. The term does not occur in Herodotus, but is attested in archaic poetry and inscriptions in the sense of 'judge', 'adjudicator', or 'witness (to an oath)'.[32] Even though Herodotus never uses the term, his work shows, as Robert Connor ((1993) 9) has noted, 'a remarkable similarity to the way *histores* functioned in early Greek society'.

Just as *apodexis*, then, *historiē* can and has been used to push Herodotus into two almost mutually exclusive directions: the search for a guilty, 'responsible' agent in the conflict between the Greeks and the barbarians, as Nagy would have it, and the critical geography and ethnography advocated by Thomas, notably in the Egyptian *logos*. For the assessment of the difference between the two positions it is relevant to observe that Thomas' account obscures the fact that the direct object of Herodotus' *historiē* of Egypt, both grammatically and notionally, is not the land or its mysterious river, but people interrogated, informants: it is the Egyptians themselves who tell Herodotus about the wonders of their land.[33] This is not to deny that *historiē* in contemporary medical writing may pertain to the authority of the researcher having seen for himself, but from this it does not follow that Herodotus' project is identical to the natural

[31] On αἰτίη in Hippocratic and other contemporary texts, see also Sauge (1992) 257 ff., who stresses, even for scientific texts, the link with αἰτεῖν (δίκην) 'demand satisfaction (from an accused party)'. See further below, p. 18.

[32] Attested usage of ἵστωρ/ἵστωρ: *Il.* 18.501, 23.486; Hes. *WeD* 792; Soph. *E.* 850; Plat. *Crat.* 406b3; Hipp. *Oath* 2 (it is ironic that the term should be used in the Hippocratic oath in this juridical sense). See also Nagy (1990) 250–9. In Dewald (1987) 153 ff. the notion of *histōr* is used metaphorically, as a narratological function: the authorial persona of the *Histories*; cf. her more recent views in Ch. 12, pp. 271–2 below. See also Cartledge and Greenwood, this volume (Ch. 15 note 21).

[33] E.g., the investigation of the Nile: ἱστορέων αὐτοὺς ἥντινα δύναμιν ἔχει ὁ Νεῖλος, 2.19.3; ἔλεγον . . . μοι . . . ἱστορέοντι, 2.113.1. Cf. already Pohlenz (1937) 44 ('die eigentliche ἱστορίη, das Verhör von Augenzeugen, von dem, was nur durch Hörensagen überliefert ist').

and medical science of his day, as Thomas implies; rather, we have to allow for the possibility that Herodotus borrows contemporary terminology to establish the authority of an enterprise that is entirely his own: investigating the past, and scrutinizing the traditions that give access to it, instead of receiving and accepting them wholesale.

Herodotus often stresses his 'having seen', most frequently and conspicuously in his account of his researches of the Egyptians and the Scythians, but the proper term in his vocabulary for autopsy and observation is not *historiē* or its cognate expressions. That concept can actually be contrasted with autopsy, as a means to gain information through *hearing*:[34]

> Ἄλλου δὲ οὐδενὸς οὐδὲν ἐδυνάμην πυθέσθαι, ἀλλὰ τοσόνδε μὲν ἄλλο ἐπὶ μακρότατον ἐπυθόμην, μέχρι μὲν Ἐλεφαντίνης πόλιος αὐτόπτης ἐλθών, τὸ δ' ἀπὸ τούτου ἀκοῇ ἤδη ἱστορέων. (2.29.1)
>
> I have not been able to learn anything from anyone else, but this much I have further been able to gather as far as I could, having come myself as far as the city of Elephantine as an eyewitness, and beyond that point making my researches through hearing.

Yet *historiē* is not merely a matter of listening either. In another well-known passage, Herodotus contrasts *historiē* as *critical* listening, along with *opsis* 'seeing' and *gnōmē* 'opinion', to the more passive reception of accounts (*logoi*) as he heard them:

> Μέχρι μὲν τούτου ὄψις τε ἐμὴ καὶ γνώμη καὶ ἱστορίη ταῦτα λέγουσά ἐστι, τὸ δὲ ἀπὸ τοῦδε Αἰγυπτίους ἔρχομαι λόγους ἐρέων κατὰ τὰ ἤκουον· προσέσται δέ τι αὐτοῖσι καὶ τῆς ἐμῆς ὄψιος. (2.99.1)
>
> Up to that point my own observation as well as my judgment and my inquiry are at the basis of what is said, but from now on I will be presenting Egyptian accounts as I heard them; still, there will be an element of personal observation in it.

Historiē, then, seems to be looking through the eyes of one's informants and making up for their imperfect point of view by the power of judgment and discrimination. Needless to say, *historiē* is the interrogation of specially selected informants, and aims at proving or disproving their view of the truth. The concept is therefore obviously connected with knowing, but it does not necessarily involve actual seeing as source of knowledge. For this reason, another etymology

[34] On this passage, see also Sauge (1992) 252; on the next passage (2.99.1), see Cartledge and Greenwood, this volume (Ch. 15), p. 355.

has recently been proposed by Edwin Floyd, who derives *historiē* (and *histōr*) not from the root *wid-* but from the verb *hizein* 'to seat'.[35] This yields the idea of convening two or more parties and listening to what they have to say. This would certainly suit the earliest occurrence of *histōr* at *Iliad* 18.501, in the description of the juridical scene on the Shield of Achilles, where the juridical sense of 'judge', 'arbiter' is particularly clear.

We do not have to decide whether or not the alternative etymology is linguistically correct to see that the semantic idea behind it provides a plausible interpretation of Herodotus' own conception of *historiē*. The core of the concept is not so much seeing yourself as acquiring knowledge through the interrogation of others who have seen, and who therefore know, or claim they know. This applies to the characters in the narrative no less than to the narrator: they, too, may be interested in what is beyond perception, remote in space or time. Croesus the Lydian king, for example, 'inquired' (*historeōn*) which of the Greek states were the most powerful, and in doing so (*historeōn*) found out that the Lacedaemonians and the Athenians were dominant at the time (1.56.1–2). And the Egyptian priests claimed they had secure knowledge about Menelaus' stay in Egypt through their own 'investigations' (*historiēisi*, 2.119.3).

The result of Croesus' and the Egyptian priests' investigations is self-evident and incontrovertible, as in the case of some of Herodotus' own researches. Concerning the question as to the real nature of Heracles, for example, Herodotus can report that 'the results of the investigation (*ta historēmena*) indicate clearly (*dēloi sapheōs*) that Heracles is an old god' (2.44.5). It remains, however, that *historiē* is not first-degree, absolute knowledge based on perception, but relative knowledge, an approximation of the facts of the matter, based on a judicious assessment of the pretended first-hand knowledge of others. Sometimes Herodotus states explicitly that his inquiries have yielded only partial and limited results: 'so far as I have been able to reach in my investigation'.[36] And the *logoi* resulting from an investigation may be

[35] Floyd (1990) 161. Floyd bases his objections to the traditional etymology primarily on the rough breathing on ἵστωρ, ἱστορία (which is not easy to harmonize with the verbal root ϝιδ-). As Rosén (1993) 146 n. 1 points out, however, the collocation of the suffix -τωρ with a reduplicated present stem ἵζ-ειν (<**si-sd*) is not without problems either.

[36] 2.34.1 ἐπ' ὅσον μακρότατον ἱστορέοντα ἦν ἐξικέσθαι; 4.192.3 ὅσον ἡμεῖς ἱστορέοντες ἐπὶ μακρότατον οἷοί τε ἐγενόμεθαι ἐξικέσθαι.

conflicting.[37] There may be 'difference' between them, as he informs us in his discussion of the number of Scythians:

> Πλῆθος δὲ τὸ Σκυθέων οὐκ οἷός τε ἐγενόμην ἀτρεκέως πυθέσθαι, ἀλλά διαφόρους λόγους περὶ τοῦ ἀριθμοῦ ἤκουον (4.81.1)
>
> As for the multitude of the Scythians, I have not been able to learn anything about it with precision: I heard different versions about their number.

Herodotus' *historiē* may aim, among other things, at knowledge about subjects of scientific interest, such as the sources of the Nile or the demography of Scythia, but its basic material is language, *logoi*. And *historiē* proceeds through judgment and discrimination, as an implicit dialogue between the opinions of the researcher and those of his informants.

Historiē, as Herodotus' *History* implicitly informs us, is always a question to which the information solicited is a response; it therefore always provides a context for whatever the interrogated informant has to say. For an illustration of this idea, let us return to the beginning of the narrative. We saw already that the idea *ait-* (*aitiēn*, *aitious*, 'guilt(y)', 'responsibility/responsible') serves as conjoining device linking the Proem to the narrative and setting the latter in motion. Since the Proem explicitly links *historiē* to the *aitiē* of the war, we can safely assume that *historiē* is at work from the very start of the narrative. Even though the investigation into the mythical 'cause' of the conflict is a dead end for Herodotus himself, soon to be abandoned for more meaningful research, it does provide a basic insight into the semantics, indeed, pragmatics, of *historiē*. To repeat the first sentence of Herodotus' account proper, as it emanates from the Proem:

> Περσέων μέν νυν οἱ λόγιοι Φοίνικας αἰτίους φασὶ γενέσθαι τῆς διαφορῆς· (1.1.1)
>
> Now the chroniclers of the Persians claim that the Phoenicians have been responsible for the conflict (lit: 'difference').

The conflict between the Greeks and the Persians is reformulated as a *diaphorē*, literally, a 'difference', 'variance'. We can imagine what the Persian *logioi* 'say' (*phasin*) as a response to a question of the

[37] E.g., Dewald (1987); Connor (1993).

histōr: 'Who according to your national tradition are *aitioi* of the 'difference' between the Greeks and the Persians?' Or even, in an imagined courtroom: 'The Greeks consider you guilty of the *diaphorē*. What do you have to say in defence?' The very state of being *aitios*, in fact, is the obligation to 'respond', as in English 'responsible'.

The verb used for demanding satisfaction from a 'responsible' party is the etymologically connected *aiteō*, which is used several times in the Persians' account as it is rendered in Herodotus' indirect discourse: the Colchian king sent heralds to Greece to 'demand satisfaction (*aiteein dikas*) for the rape of Medea and demand back (*ap-aiteein*) his daughter' (1.2.3). A little later, both in mythical time and in Herodotus' story time, the Greeks will do exactly the same for Helen in Troy.[38] This mutual demanding of satisfaction does not stop with the earliest dealings between the Greeks and the barbarians; it continues into the *historiē* of which Herodotus gives us here the results: the Persian *logioi* apparently speak in defence, claiming that in having launched a wholesale attack on Troy the Greeks are the real *aitioi tēs diaphorēs*. The end of this imaginary 'trial' is well known. Herodotus leaves this inconclusive case for what it is and turns to the man whom he 'knows' (*oida*) to have started the hostilities against the Greeks (1.5.3). But meanwhile he *has* given *logoi* on the subject, and he *has* shown their difference.

The attempt to retrace the earliest *aitiē* for the 'difference' between the Greeks and the barbarians points up a case of precisely what Herodotus' work, as presented in the Proem, claims to be able to prevent: 'things made to happen by men' (*genomena ex anthrōpōn*) that have become 'fading [or extinct] with time', *tōi khronōi exitēla*.[39] Yet the very impossibility of the recovery of these remote events reveals an essential aspect of Herodotus' *historiē*: its inherently dialogic nature. The search for the *aitiē* of human behaviour generates new human behaviour in the form of language: opinions that answer the *histōr*'s question, responding to each other, contradicting each other, either rejected or accepted by the discriminating investigator. *Historiē*, in other words, takes the *diaphorē* 'difference, conflict' of the historical

[38] 1.3.2 ἀπαιτέειν τε Ἑλένην καὶ δίκας τῆς ἁρπαγῆς αἰτέειν. Cf. 2.118.3; 4.164.1; 8.114.1. On the relation between αἴτιος and αἰτέω in this light, see also Sauge (1992) 257 ff., who goes as far as to gloss αἰτίη as 'demande de réparation' rather than 'cause'.

[39] See also Dewald (1987) 169.

process to a new, semantic, level, since it creates the space for a *diaphorē* between two or more *logoi*, always including the *histōr*'s own.

The beginning of the narrative merely puts in practice this essential aspect of Herodotus' method. Later on he will explain at various points. 'Let anyone to whom such things are credible', he says at 2.123.1, 'do what they want to do with what the Egyptians say; I myself stick to the principle that underlies all of my account: I write what I heard being said by either party.' An even fuller disclosure is prompted by the controversial subject of the role of Argos in the war with Xerxes: 'Whether Xerxes sent a herald to Argos with this message', he says (7.152.1), 'and whether messengers from Argos went to Sousa to interrogate Artoxerxes about their friendship I cannot say with certainty (*ouk . . . atrekeōs*), nor do I express an opinion (*gnōmēn . . . apophainomai*)[40] on these matters other than the one expressed by the Argives themselves'. These words are complemented a few lines later with the following declaration:[41]

> Ἐγὼ δὲ ὀφείλω λέγειν τὰ λεγόμενα, πείθεσθαί γε μὲν οὐ παντάπασιν ὀφείλω (καί μοι τοῦτο τὸ ἔπος ἐχέτω ἐς πάντα τὸν λόγον)· (7.152.3)
>
> I am bound to record [lit. 'say', *legein*] what is being said, but I am not at all bound to believe it—and this word (*epos*) will hold true for the whole of my account.

In light of these statements of method, the phrase *ta genomena ex anthrōpōn* from the Proem acquires a new and essential meaning: 'things made to happen by men' is not limited to things done, but includes things said. *Historiē* as conducted by Herodotus provides a forum for the works *and* the words of the past. Conflict, difference, is in the nature of the object of Herodotus' *historiē*, which presents itself as the search for an *aitiē* of a difference; but it is also the *product* of Herodotus' *historiē*, in the conflicting *logoi* for which *historiē* provides the context. In investigating the causes of the conflict, the *histōr* becomes responsible for what his project purports to investigate: he becomes *aitios diaphorēs* 'responsible for difference'. We shall see in the next sections how a study of *apodexis* complements this deep connection between the researcher and the characters of the story he tells.

[40] This negative phrase is significant in light of the formula γνώμην ἀποδέξασθαι (rather than ἀποφαίνεσθαι); see note 47 below.

[41] On this passage, see Jacoby (1913) 408–9. See also 3.3.1; 3.9.2. See also Cartledge and Greenwood, this volume (Ch. 15, p. 356).

Apodexis: *Proof in Context*

In his discussion of the size of Egypt, Herodotus criticizes the erroneous ideas of the Ionians. The argumentation requires him to use three times the verb *apodeiknumi*:

> If we want to accept what the Ionians maintain about Egypt (who hold that Egypt is only the Delta [. . .]), then we would be proving (ἀποδεικνύοιμεν ἄν) that at some point the Egyptians did not have a country at all. (2.15.1)
>
> So if my reasoning about these matters is correct, the Ionians have false ideas about Egypt. But suppose the opinion of the Ionians is right: then I am proving (ἀποδείκνυμι) that the Greeks and the Ionians themselves do not know how to count. (2.16.1)
>
> My claim that the extent of Egypt is such as I am proving in my present discourse (ἀποδείκνυμι τῷ λόγῳ) is also confirmed by an oracle of Ammon about which I learned after my own opinion (τῆς ἐμεωυτοῦ γνώμης) about Egypt was formed. (2.18.1)

This is of course the world of demonstration and proof that Thomas highlights.[42] It is, however, important to note that *apodeiknumi* is not merely a matter of 'proof', but also the *act* of proving something, as a response to a specific situation. In the first two instances, this situation is given in a conditional clause in which the Ionians' opinion is expressed, hypothetically. In the first example, the idea that Egypt is only the Delta is shown to be invalid, since it amounts to a manifestly absurd claim. The act of *apodeiknunai* is not performed for its own sake, but is invoked, as the inevitable consequence of a false belief. Likewise, in the second example, Herodotus' 'proof' that the Greeks cannot count is conditioned by a specific context. Without that context, the act of proving would not have taken place. Similarly, in the last passage, Herodotus' demonstration of the size of Egypt is prompted by the Greeks' ignorance. In another geographical passage, the proof required by a given claim cannot take place, supposedly due to lacking or insufficient *historiē*:

> τὸν δὲ Ὠκεανὸν λόγῳ μὲν λέγουσι ἀπὸ ἡλίου ἀνατολέων ἀρξάμενον γῆν περὶ πᾶσαν ῥέειν, ἔργῳ δὲ οὐκ ἀποδεικνύουσι. (4.8.2)
>
> They [sc. the Greeks] say in their account that Oceanus, starting from the East, is flowing all around the world, but they do not prove this with hard fact.

[42] Thomas (2000) 176, with discussion of the passages cited. See also Darbo-Peschanski (1987) 161.

The mutual expectancy between proof and context is here a matter of the polar contrast between *logōi* and *ergōi*, which is underscored by the use of *men . . . de*: proof is required and anticipated, but does not follow.

The notion of context remains equally important also when we leave the agonistic sphere of proof and opposing claims: each and every instance of the verbal idea *apo-deik-* in the *Histories* is an act that is performed as a response to a specific situation. The shepherd, in the story of Cyrus' birth, who says he is ready to 'show' (*apodeiknunai*, 1.113.2; cf. 1.110.3) the body of the infant does so at a specific request: he has to prove to Harpagos that the newborn prince is dead in order to avoid severe punishment; the Persians who 'show' (*apodeiknunti*, 1.136.1) their children do so for a specific purpose: special gifts are promised by the king for the man who has the most numerous offspring; the Egyptians who 'showed' the body of their father (2.136.2) did so as part of a well-defined transaction: as borrowers they were required by law to provide a security to the lender; the army division that was required to 'bring' (*apodexaien*, 8.35.2) the treasures of Delphi to Xerxes acted on specific military orders.

This contextualization of the act of 'deixis' is due to the force of the preverb; on account of its meaning 'back again' (LSJ D.4), *apo-* can lend a supplementary contextual dimension to the basic meaning of a verb.[43] In the case of verbs denoting speech, the addition of *apo-* turns the sensibility to context into an immediately dialogic sense: *apo-logeomai* 'speak in return', 'defend oneself against', *apo-krinomai* 'reason in return', 'answer'. In a recent study of *apo-phthegma* as a 'performance of wisdom', Joseph Russo has aptly formulated this as 'the sense of giving back an utterance particularly called forth by the social context operating upon the speakers'.[44]

At this point it may be useful to change the preverb and turn for a moment to *epi-deik-*. Herodotus' usage clearly shows that far from being synonyms, the two verbs have very specific and different meanings. When Candaules' wife says to Gyges that her husband has 'shown her naked' (*eme epedexato gumnēn*, 1.11.5), she means the gratuitous display of her body, uncalled for and not in response to any

[43] E.g., ἀπο-δίδωμι 'give back what is expected'; ἀπο-καθίστημι 'return what is due', 'restore'; ἀπο-λαμβάνω 'receive what is one's due', 'απ-αιτέω 'demand back' (p. 18 above).

[44] Russo (1997) 59.

previous request. When Croesus' servants 'show' (*epedeiknusan*, 1.30.1) Solon the king's vast treasuries, the unnecessary display fails to impress the king's guest and so misses its point. The action noun *epidexis* occurs once, in the sense of 'surprising spectacle', used for the he-goat that mounted a woman in full view of everybody (2.46.4). On account of the meaning of *epi-* ('besides', 'in addition to') the act of *epi-deiknunai* may create a certain distance between the display and its witnesses: the spectacle is an addition to a given context, or its witnesses are external spectators of the display.

The examples of *epi-deik* and *apo-deik* reveal a further difference, which will prove important for the meaning of *apodexis* in the Proem. The object of *epideixis* is always shown as is; it existed before it was shown or displayed and is not changed or modified by it. Zeus shows his face to Heracles (2.42.2) or Atossa her breast to Democedes (3.135.2) in acts of *epideixis* that leave the objects shown unaffected. What is 'shown' in an act denoted by *apo-deik*, by contrast, is always changed in the act, and may not even have existed before. The person or thing pointed at in an act of *apodeiknunai* acquires a new function according to the requirements of the context. *Apodeiknunai* is 'proving' that the person or thing 'pointed at' is different from what he or she was before; thus the verb frequently means 'assign a specific function', 'appoint',[45] and Herodotus expresses the healing of Darius' foot by Democedes as 'he proved him to be healthy' (*hugiea min eonta apedexe*, 3.130.3; cf. 3.134.1).

The examples of *apo-deik* shown thus far are all in the active voice. They display semantic features that are relevant for our purpose, but we move closer to the meaning of *apodexis* in the Proem when we turn to the instances where *apo-deik* is used in the middle voice.[46] We will see that the middle voice, in accordance with its basic meaning, stresses the involvement of the subject in the act, which yields the idea of personal achievement as an important feature of the semantics of *apodexis*.

[45] 1.124.3; 1.125.2; 1.127.2; 1.162.2; 3.63.2; 4.167.1; 5.25.1; 5.25.2; 5.32; 5.32; 5.64.1; 5.83.3; 5.97.3; 5.99.2; 6.57.2; 6.94.2; 6.95.1; 7.2.1; 7.3.4; 7.4.1; 7.81.

[46] Cf. Erbse (1956) 209–11.

Recording Accomplishment

The dialogic 'giving back' to a context, which, as we saw, is the sense of the preverb *apo-*, is central in the important Herodotean phrase *apodexasthai tēn gnōmēn* which I will translate as 'perform/put into practice one's opinion'. This expression is used frequently by Herodotus for situations of speech and decision-making in his narrative. The act of *apodexasthai* is not simply the expression or presentation of an opinion or a belief *tout court*, but a constructive contribution to an evolving communicative reality. The *gnōmē* is pointed out not as a display for its own sake, but in response to other *gnōmai* or with the intention of shaping subsequent ones. In fact, it may be in overt conflict with other views presented in the particular context. For example, when all of Cyrus' advisers suggest that the Persians await the attack of the army of Queen Tomyris, Croesus alone, 'finding fault' (*memphomenos*) with this advice, presents a view that is opposed to the opinion at hand (*apedeiknuto enantiēn tēi prokeimenēi gnōmēi*, 1.207.1); similarly, when Mardonios has spoken in favour of invading Greece, no one of the Persians present dares 'present an opinion against the one at hand' (*gnōmēn apodeiknusthai antiēn tēi prokeimenēi*, 7.10.1).[47]

When Herodotus' own *gnōmē* is the object of the verb *apodexasthai*, the sense of conflict and difference of opinion is equally strong: on the subject of the importance of the contribution of the Athenians to the war with Xerxes, Herodotus says that he is obliged to put forth a view (*gnōmēn apodexasthai*) that will not please everybody:

> Ἐνθαῦτα ἀναγκαίῃ ἐξέργομαι γνώμην ἀποδέξασθαι ἐπίφθονον μὲν πρὸς τῶν πλεόνων ἀνθρώπων, ὅμως δέ, τῇ γέ μοι φαίνεται εἶναι ἀληθές, οὐκ ἐπισχήσω. (7.139.1)
>
> At this point I cannot but put forth an opinion which in fact is odious to the majority; still, in so far as it seems to me a matter of true fact, I will not withhold it.

[47] Other examples: 1.170.1; 1.171.1; 1.207.1 (μεμφόμενος); 3.74.4; 3.81.3; 3.160.1; 4.97.2; 4.98.2; 4.137.3; 6.41.3; 6.43.3; 7.3.1; 7.6.5; 7.10.1 (ἀντίην τῷ προκειμένῃ); 7.46.1; 7.99.3; 8.68α1; 8.108.2 (ἐναντίην); 9.58.3 (disapproval: δειλοτάτην). Notice that the supposedly synonymous phrase ἀποφαίνομαι τὴν γνώμην (e.g., 1.40; 1.207.2; 2.120.5; 3.71.1; 7.8δ2; 7.52.1; 7.143.3; 7.152.1; 8.49.1; 9.5.2) appears to be more neutral, and does not convey the same sense of controversy and conflict (the underlined examples represent Herodotus' own opinion; see also note 40 above).

Without the Athenians, Greece would surely have fallen into Persian hands, despite the *apodexis* of *megala erga* on the part of the Spartans.

The mysterious behaviour of the Nile yields another characteristic moment:

> Εἰ δὲ δεῖ μεμψάμενον γνώμας τὰς προκειμένας αὐτὸν περὶ τῶν ἀφανέων γνώμην ἀποδέξασθαι, φράσω δι' ὅ τι μοι δοκέει πληθύεσθαι ὁ Νεῖλος τοῦ θέρεος· (2.24.1)
>
> If I must, after criticizing the theories mentioned, put forth a view myself about things invisible, I will say what is to my mind the cause of the flooding of the Nile in the summer.

Herodotus' personal *gnōmē* is here obviously part of his *historiē* of a controversial topic, a matter of scientific proof and argument, but again we observe that Herodotus' own practice is similar to that of characters in his tale outside scientific contexts.[48] The *apodexis* of *historiē* apparently has something in common with the *apodexis* of a *gnōmē*, with counselling and deliberation.[49] Both deal with difference.

It has something in common also with an equally important type of behaviour in the historical process. The verb *apodeiknusthai* is frequently combined, as early as the Proem, as we saw, with the standard phrase *erga megala*, yielding a formula that denotes a key concept in Herodotus' thought and work.[50] The use of *apodeiknusthai erga megala* is especially frequent in Book Two, where the record of achievement of the Egyptians and their kings is being reviewed, but it remains common throughout the *Histories*.[51] In the Battle of Salamis, the Aeginetans, for example, are said to have 'performed noteworthy deeds' (*erga apedexanto logou axia*, 8.91); and in the Battle of Plataea 'by far the best' (*aristos makrōi*) on the Greek side was Aristodemos, the sole survivor of the three hundred Spartiates who had died earlier at Thermopylae, who wanted to make up for this dishonour: desiring to die a most glorious death, he 'left the ranks in his battle rage and wrought great deeds' (*lussōnta te kai ekleiponta tēn taxin erga apodexasthai megala*, 9.71.3).

The idea of 'achievement' expressed with *erga megala apodexasthai* is so central to the meaning of *apo-deik* that even without any object

[48] In the two remaining instances, 2.146.1 and 8.8.3, the context is again conflict between accounts.

[49] On the relation between ἱστορίη and γνώμη, see also Sauge (1992) 11.

[50] See also Erbse (1956) 211.

[51] On ἐργα μεγάλα (τε καὶ θωμαστά), see Raubitschek (1939).

the verb continues to convey the idea of personal accomplishment. In the Battle of Plataea, for example, the allied troops of the Persian army 'fled without accomplishing anything' (*oute ti apodexamenos epheugon*, 9.67). The nature of the accomplishment can also be expressed with a more specific term substituted for *erga megala*: of the remarkable works of irrigation of Queen Semiramis of Assyria we learn that she 'accomplished dykes all across the plain, very much worth visiting' (*apedexato khōmata ana to pedion eonta axiotheēta*, 1.184).

The direct relevance of this sense of *apo-deik* for the interpretation of *historiēs apodexis* in the Proem is underscored by the fact that all of the four other actual occurrences of the action noun *apodexis* in the *Histories* are used to convey the sense of 'achievement' or 'accomplishment'. Croesus advises Cyrus to cross over to the territory of the Massagetae and lure Queen Tomyris' army with a sumptuous banquet, which will 'leave' to Cyrus' army the 'accomplishment of greet deeds' (*leipetai apodexis ergōn megalōn*, 1.207.7); Egyptian priests assure Herodotus that 'no record of achievement' (*oudemian ergōn apodexin*, 2.101.1) exists for the remaining kings from the list; the common memorial of the Twelve Kings of Egypt, a labyrinth situated a little above Lake Moeris, surpassed in cost and labour all the 'walls and public works' (*teikhea te kai ergōn apodexin*, 2.148.2) of the Greeks; and, finally, Mardonius' assessment of the military situation after the defeat of the Persian fleet at Salamis was that his Persian troops were not responsible for it, and 'anxious for achievement' (*boulomenoisi sphi genoit' an apodexis*, 8.101.2).

In all these cases it is obvious that no accomplishment or achievement whatsoever *precedes* the *apodexis*. The *apodexis* of great deeds *is* their accomplishment, their enactment, *not* their display or showing. Those of the Medes and Persians who proved their virtue in the Battle of Plataea (*apedeiknunto aretas*, 9.40) did not make a mere display, but they proved their worth in the very situation.[52] Before we proceed with asking what this means for the *apodexis* of Herodotus' own *historiē*, we have to address another question. If the essence of the act of *apodexis* is its contextualization and 'situatedness', as was

[52] Cf. 1.176.1; 7.23.3; 7.223.4. There is an instructive difference between 7.24 (Ξέρξης) ἐθέλων τε δύναμιν ἀποδείκνυσθαι καὶ μνημόσυνα λιπέσθαι and Thuc. 6.47.1 ἐπιδείξαντας . . . τὴν δύναμιν τῆς Ἀθηναίων πόλεως (cf. Thuc. 6.31.4): Xerxes wanted to *prove* his power by leaving a great achievement to posterity (see below), whereas the Athenians merely wanted to *display* their military force.

suggested above, then what is the context for the *apodexis* of great deeds as we see it throughout the *Histories*? We move in the direction of an answer to this question when we consider another typically Herodotean phrase.

Throughout the *Histories*, Herodotus imparts to the players in the historical process the desire to distinguish themselves in the eyes of posterity, to leave signs by which their existence on earth can be remembered. The typical phrase for this is *mnēmosunon (mnēmosuna) lipesthai* 'to leave things (of oneself) to be remembered'. The *mnēmosunon* is usually an artifact or monument, but not necessarily so. Examples of *mnēmosuna* include the waterworks of Queen Nitocris of Babylonia (1.185.1, 186.1), the gigantic statues erected by Sesostris in front of the temple of Hephaestus (2.110.1), the brick pyramid of Asychis (2.136.3), but also the *bon mot* of Dieneces the Lacedaemonian belonging to the oral tradition feeding on the Battle of Thermopylae (7.226.2). All of these examples belong to the sphere of *apodexis ergōn megalōn*. The description of the *mnēmosuna* of Queen Nitocris follows closely on that of the achievements of Queen Semiramis for which, as we saw, the verb *apedexato* is used; the description of Asychis' pyramid is part of a list of the achievements of this king, rounded off with the phrase *touton men tosauta apodexasthai* ('this [king], then, is said to have achieved this much', 2.136.4). The two phrases *apodexasthai (erga megala)* and *mnēmosuna (lipesthai)*, in fact, are very much in each other's semantic orbit. The latter can be the direct object of the former (*apodexasthai mnēmosuna*, 'to have achieved things to be remembered', 2.101.2, said of the Propylaia of King Moeris), and the two phrases can complement each other in one complex expression (e.g., *ethelōn te dunamin apodeiknusthai kai mnēmosuna lipesthai*, 'wanting to put his power in practice and to leave achievements to be remembered', 7.24, said of Xerxes and the canal through the Athos Peninsula).[53]

Turning now to the question as to the context of the *apodexis ergōn megalōn*, we notice that there is a reciprocity between on the one hand the intentions of the Greeks and barbarians engaged in the making of history and on the other hand the intentions of Herodotus himself in making his *historiē*. The desire to leave *mnēmosuna* is mirrored and answered by Herodotus' wish to record them as *erga megala*

[53] On μνημόσυνα λιπέσθαι and its connection with ἀποδέξασθαι, see also Drexler (1972) 23–5.

apodekhthenta. In other words, what is recorded *wants* to be recorded and the context in which the deed is performed and accomplished is nothing other than posterity, more specifically, the *Histories* of Herodotus.

We are reminded here of the heroic condition as presented by the *Iliad*, in particular of Hector, who speaks about the future at various moments, e.g.:[54]

> μὴ μὰν ἀσπουδί γε καὶ ἀκλειῶς ἀπολοίμην,
> ἀλλὰ μέγα ῥέξας τι καὶ ἐσσομένοισι πυθέσθαι. (*Il.* 22.304–5)
>
> It will certainly not be without great effort and great fame that I perish; no, that will happen after I have accomplished a great deed, for people of the future to hear about.

Hector uses a negative compound form of the root *kle(w)-* (*akleiōs*) to designate an undesirable state in the future, and he combines the root *(w)reg* (a morphological alternative to *(w)erg* in *ergon*) with *mega* (*mega rhexas*): a way of speaking that points ahead to the future of Herodotus' Proem with its intention not to let *megala erga* become *akleā*.[55]

It looks as if Herodotus, as the present argument progresses, is becoming more and more dependent on the Homeric conception of heroic achievement. Yet in spite of the reminiscence there is an essential difference. For Hector and the epic tradition that envelops him, great deeds carry their own *kleos*, perpetuated unproblematically through epic poetry under the authority of the Muse. If there is a lack of *kleos* in the future, this is due to a hero's not performing a great deed in the present.[56] To this epic scenario, Herodotus opposes the destructive force of time, the substance that makes human achievements lose colour and lustre (the *tōi khronōi exitēla* from the Proem).[57] Without proper recording, any great deed, however heroic,

[54] Also *Il.* 7.89–91, where he thinks of the tomb of one of his defeated opponents as a sign pointing to the past, Hector's glorious present; see also Cobet (Ch. 17) and Boedeker (Ch. 5), this volume (p. 389 and p. 99, resp.), as well as Bakker (1997a) 165–6; (1997b) 33. On Herodotus and epic intentions, see also Erbse (1992) 122. Within Herodotus' narrative, cf. 6.109.3, 7.220.2.

[55] See also Pelliccia (1992) 74 n. 23.

[56] This happens in the *Histories* at 9.72.2, where Callicrates, in truly Homeric manner 'the most beautiful man in the Greek camp', died without having been able to accomplish (ἀποδέξασθαι) a great deed; ironically, he does get his *kleos*, in the framework of Herodotus' *apodexis*. On this passage, see also Nagy (1987) 178.

[57] On ἐξίτηλα, see Moles (1999) sect. 8, who argues that this term creates an

will lose its *kleos*. But recording is not a matter of merely receiving the report from the past; it takes selection, discrimination, and research. In Herodotus' conception, *historiē*, with its positive results *and* the questions which it leaves or raises, has taken over the authority of poetic memory and the Muses.[58]

We can now reappreciate the seemingly unnecessary rendering, in indirect discourse, of the stories of reciprocal bride-stealing that the Persian *logioi* adduce as the *aitiē* of the conflict between the Greeks and the barbarians. Such mythologizing, the domain of myth, poetic memory, and the Muses, is unable to answer the questions that *historiē* poses. But *historiē* remains linked with the Muses as source and safeguard of information. Homer, when faced with the intimidating number (*plēthus*) of the Greek leaders in the Trojan War (*Il.* 2.488), uses this moment to confess to his human shortcomings and invoke the Muses to assist him. When Herodotus finds himself confronting a similar problem (i.e., the number of Scythians (*plêthos*), 4.81.1, see pages 16–17 above), he offers us a sentence that reads as a conscious stylistic evocation of the famous Homeric passage; but he gives us at the same time one of his most characteristic descriptions of *historiē* as a matter of 'differing *logoi*'. The difference between human shortcomings and divine vision has yielded to a difference between human visions. The intellectual load of discriminating between them is a heavy one, and accordingly *apodexis* is not only the *accomplishment* of great deeds, but also their *recording*, which cannot fail to become a great accomplishment itself, a *mega ergon*, in the process.[59]

Herodotus, Thucydides, and the Making of History

The Herodotus that emerges from the foregoing discussion of *historiē* and *apodexis* is neither an oral storyteller nor an accomplished modern scientist. Or rather he is both, using the vocabulary of the lat-

'inscriptional' atmosphere, either in its genealogical sense of 'extinct' (cf. 5.39.2), which points to funerary monuments, or in the sense of 'fading', which would contrast the durability of Herodotus' work with the transient nature of material artifacts. On the Proem as an inscription, see pages 29–32 below.

[58] See also Darbo-Peschanski (1987) 162, Boedeker, this volume, Ch. 5, p. 100.

[59] One may wonder whether Herodotus was aware of the parallel with Telemachus, who set out on a voyage to inquire after the *kleos* of his father (*Od.* 3.82), to win *kleos* himself in the process (*Od.* 1.95).

ter to revolutionize the practice of the former. *Historiē*, the term of choice for contemporary critical research based on autopsy, becomes in Herodotus' hands a displaced viewing, a critical examination of the opinion of those who have seen. Herodotus shares with the epic poet his not having been on the spot and his not having seen, but he makes up for it, even appropriating an authority that is denied to the epic poet, by adopting the intellectual stance of the day.

Historiē, then, is not merely 'research', nor is *apodexis* merely its 'publication' or 'presentation;' *apodexis*, as we see it develop in the course of the *Histories*, appears to be, rather, the enactment of an accomplishment. Within the framework of the *Histories* and in the historical reality that it evokes, *historiē* is what makes *apodexis* possible, either in the form of opinions presented by historical personalities or as a matter of accomplishment on the part of agents in the historical process: the great achievements of the past that become an *apodexis* specifically in the context of Herodotus' *History*. And, significantly, both the opinions and the accomplishments create 'difference', in the form of either controversy in debate or conflict in history, of which the *diaphorē* between the Greeks and the barbarians is the overarching example.

But 'difference' is more than something that is represented *within* Herodotus' rendering of the past; as we saw, the very process of *historiē* is a matter of difference as it reveals conflicting accounts of problematic subject matter, not to mention the cases where Herodotus' own opinion is overtly controversial. To the extent that Herodotus' *historiē* itself leaves questions unanswered or raises problems, the final decision is deferred to the *Histories*' public, then and now. Anyone who reads Herodotus' work is invited to judge the achievements of the past through the achievement of Herodotus himself, which writing has prevented from becoming 'faded with time'.[60] In being asked to conduct their own *historiē*, Herodotus' future audiences make possible the *apodexis* of Herodotus himself.

In this light we can consider a final element of the Proem, to which too little attention has been paid: the deictic pronoun *hēde* which modifies *historiēs apodexis*. This pronoun, as it is used in narrative, is often treated, without much overt discussion, as the cataphoric pronoun that points ahead to what follows in the text.[61] This

[60] On 'writing', see also the contribution of Rösler (Ch. 4) to this volume.

[61] As in the common formula to introduce direct speech ἔλεγε τάδε 'spoke as

would imply that Herodotus himself, in the act of writing, is the deictic centre of the Proem: 'what follows (i.e., what I have before me) is the *historiēs apodexis* of Herodotus of Halicarnassus', or 'the *historiēs apodexis* of Herodotus of Halicarnassus is as follows'. Such a discourse-internal function of *hēde*, however, does not exhaust the possibilities of this demonstrative; indeed, the cataphoric use of *hode* is not even its primary function. When used in interactive discourse contexts, the proper *locus* of this proximal deictic element, *hode* is typically discourse-external, either marking something as close to the speaker *and* the hearer, or referring to the discourse itself, even to the speaker himself in the act of uttering it.[62]

This would mean for the Proem that the deictic centre of *historiēs apodexis hēde* is constituted by the *reader*, who is conceived of as standing before Herodotus' monumental achievement.[63] The deictic orientation of the prologue would then become that of an inscription.[64] As is known, dedicatory or funeral inscriptions can refer to themselves as *tode sēma* or *tode mnēma* 'this tomb/monument here', locating themselves as close with respect to the passerby, the monument's reader.[65] The passerby, cast by the monument's inscription in the role of speaker, is made the *origo* of a deictic act that will be performed as long as the monument is standing, and read. Herodotus' first words thus become an implicit version of the *sphragis* of the cor-

follows', e.g., 1.11.2; 1.36.2, etc.; or the cases where ὅδε, used predicatively, refers ahead to the content of, e.g., a γνώμη, e.g., 1.132.1; 2.17.4; 2.17, etc. Cf. Kühner-Gerth (1898–1904) 1: 646. See also de Jong, this volume (Ch. 11), p. 259.

[62] Thus, Herodotus can present things as close to himself and his public, e.g., 1.1.1 τήνδε τὴν θάλασσαν 'this sea', as opposed to the Red Sea mentioned just before; 2.106.4; 4.118.1 τήνδε τὴν ἤπειρον, as opposed to τῇ ἠπείρῳ τῇ ἑτέρῃ (it is not necessary to take this use of the deictic as a trace of oral delivery of the work; it seems preferable to see the deictic as uttered within the deictic centre of the Greeks, regardless of a specific moment). For the link between ὅδε and the first grammatical person, see, e.g., ὅδε τοι παρειμι as uttered by young Cyrus before Astyages (Hdt. 1.115.3); cf. Svenbro (1993) 33 ff. (see note 63) and Bakker (1999b) 10 on Hesiod's self-presentation at *Th.* 24.

[63] On the future orientation of the *Histories*, see also Rösler (Ch. 4, this volume).

[64] For this idea, see now Moles (1999), with extensive discussion also of Thucydides 1.21–22 in this connection, and, earlier, Svenbro (1993) 149–50, focussing on the author's referring to himself in the third person as a 'monumental' way of saying.

[65] In other words, the monument is 'speaking' of itself in the third person. See Svenbro (1993) 26–34, who argues that this deictic orientation was preceded by an 'ego-centric' phase, in which the monument 'spoke' in the first person, with the transition point somewhere around the middle of the 6th cent. BCE. A simple example is the dedicatory epigram cited by Thucydides (6.54): μνῆμα τόδ' ἧς ἀρχῆς Πεισίστρατος Ἱππίου υἱός | θῆκεν Ἀπόλλωνος Πυθίου ἐν τεμένει.

pus of Theognidean elegy, which actually cites its readers or listeners (the difference is immaterial) in the act of acknowledging the authenticity of the text before them: 'And so will every one say: "These are the words (*epē*) of Theognis of Megara, who is named among all humans".'[66]

If Herodotus' Proem is understood along these lines, then its deictic orientation underscores what our study of *apo-deik* in the *Histories* had already revealed: the recording of 'great monuments' (architectural or otherwise) becomes a great monument itself, an achievement on a par with the *megala erga apodekhthenta*, whose *kleos* it intends to preserve.[67] In speaking of *apodexis hēde*, then, Herodotus appears to be no less oriented toward the future of his work than is Thucydides, who famously characterizes his own work as a *ktēma es aei*, 'a possession for all time'.[68]

The understanding of *apodexis* that I have proposed in the preceding pages, in fact, may shed light on Thucydides' supposed reference to Herodotus. The focus of interest is the phrase in which Thucydides describes the kind of ephemeral public utterance to which he pretends to oppose his own durable creation: *agōnisma es to parakhrêma akoúein* 'a performance to be listened to in the immediate present' (1.22.4). The phrase presumably conveys the idea of the intention to please an immediate, contemporary, audience. *Agōnisma* is usually taken as 'declamation' or as 'competitively presented lecture', but a recent survey of the earliest occurrences of the term in fifth-century texts goes in a slightly different direction. According to William Johnson, *agōnisma* means 'the accomplishment of a notable act' with a focus 'not so much on the intrinsic value of the achievement as (on) the popular favour that it brings'.[69] Under such an understanding,

[66] Theogn. 22–3 (cf. 20: τοῖσδ' ἔπεσιν).

[67] On Herodotus' future-oriented stance, see also Connor (1987) 258, Lateiner (1989) 5n8 as well as Raaflaub, this volume (Ch. 7). For the opposite view that Herodotus is not interested in reaching beyond his immediate audience (Thucydides' supposed hint at 1.22.4, but see below), see, e.g., Fornara (1971a) 60.

[68] Moles (1999) section 4 discusses κτῆμα as 'monument'. The future orientation of Thucydides' undertaking is also apparent in the aorist verb (Θουκυδίδης) ξυνέγραψεν, which occurs in the Proem as well as in the recurrent formula for the end of a year (Th. 2.103.2, etc.): the verb '(Thucydides) has written' implies the time of a reader in the future, see Bakker (1997d) 30.

[69] Johnson (1994) 232–8; citation p. 233. Johnson notes that in Thucydides the term ἀγώνισμα usually means the glory that results from a notable achievement; the term is used (7.56.2) to represent the Syracusans' own characterization of their victory over the Athenians.

the term begins to resonate with respect to Herodotus' *apodexis*, and may even be meant to supplant it consciously: the choice of *agōnisma* would subtly present Herodotus' work as a mere achievement in the present, devoid, unlike Thucydides' own work, of lasting importance for the future.

However that may be, and whether or not Thucydides' choice of words betrays an indirect challenge to the monumental aspirations of Herodotus' work as a competitor for the favour of future audiences, an essential difference between the two remains. Where Thucydides sees his work, polished and authoritative, as a standard for analysing the events of the future, which will always be comparable given the constancy of human nature (*kata to anthrōpinon*, 1.22.4), Herodotus, more involved in the actual process of *historiē* and intent on *showing it in practice*, asks his future audiences to be more involved as well. Far from pleasing the crowd in an immediate present, Herodotus' *apodexis*, as we have seen, does not shun controversy, and looks ahead to the audience of the future. In reading the inscription on his monument, we not only become, implicitly, speakers who acknowledge Herodotus' achievement; we are also are cast in Herodotus' own role. Standing not before the publication or presentation of the Inquiry, but before the Inquiry *itself*, its enactment, we are asked to do what Herodotus did himself: to listen critically, to question, and to judge. We are also asked to do what Herodotus did with the monuments and *megala erga* he encountered: to record. The present volume is among the many proofs that Herodotus achieved what he aspired to.

CHAPTER TWO

HERODOTUS AND ATHENS[1]

John Moles

Most older scholarship considered Herodotus an admirer both of Persian-war and contemporary Athens.[2] This view had diverse props: Herodotus' presence in Athens in the 440s and perhaps later; an ancient tradition that he was a supporter, even flatterer, of Athens, which allegedly paid him; his knowledge of the city, its history (hypothetically largely Alcmaeonid-derived and Alcmaeonid and 'Periclean' in sympathy) and its political terminology and gossip; his supposed membership of 'Pericles' intellectual circle'; Pericles' alleged Panhellenic appeal; and Herodotus' praises of Athens.[3] Strasburger and others[4] attacked some of these props, whose quality certainly varies. But the question involves *all* the problems of interpreting Herodotus.

Modern critics seek to interpret texts rather than uncover their writers' beliefs. Notwithstanding theories of 'constructed' or 'implied' authors, Herodotus problematizes the distinction. His is the 'voice' of the text:[5] he repeatedly obtrudes his own person.[6] The uncertainties of Herodotus' work multiply the problems. His final production was

[1] Jacoby (1913) 226–42; Wells (1923) 151–61; Kleinknecht (1940); Strasburger (1955); Harvey (1966); Legrand (1966) 104–13; Fornara (1971a) 37–58, 75–91; Gillis (1979) 1–13, 45–58; Hart (1982) 168–74; Evans (1979b); (1991) 92–4; Forrest (1984); Raaflaub (1987); Ostwald (1991); Stadter (1992); Derow (1995); Moles (1996); Romm (1998) 52–5, 185–90.

[2] Meyer (1899) 198; Jacoby (1913) 240, 357–60; Schmid and Staehlin (1959(1934)) I 2: 580; Pohlenz (1937) 185; Powell (1939) 81, 88; Myres (1953) 12; Ehrenberg (1954) 137; dissentient older scholarship: How and Wells (1928) 1: 7–8, 447–8; Focke (1927) 27–8.

[3] Jacoby (1913) 226–42; How and Wells (1928) 1: 6–7, 41–3; Myres (1953) 10–13; Legrand (1966) 29–37; Evans (1979b); Gould (1989) 14–18; Podlecki (1977 (Herodotus never in Athens)) is untenable.

[4] Strasburger (1955); Fornara (1971a) 37–58; Forrest (1984); Raaflaub (1987); Thomas (1989); Ostwald (1991); Stadter (1992); Derow (1995); Moles (1996); *contra* Harvey (1966); Evans (1979b).

[5] Svenbro (1993) 150; Moles (1999).

[6] Marincola (1987) 122 n. 5, 137; Dewald (1987); and Ch. 12 in this volume.

a unified text,[7] designed primarily for reading.[8] But, as with Thucydides, the *Kompositions-Frage*[9] disturbs. Herodotus gave oral performances and readings in different places;[10] his sources were predominantly oral. How *organic* is this text? How 'oral' in outlook and style is his writing?[11] How independent is he? Does he ever fabricate? Most crucially, does Herodotus' narrative reflect *implicitly* on political developments from 479/8 to contemporary times?[12] The text's dating is itself controversial;[13] some datings invoke alleged contemporary allusion.

Such allusion is not theoretically excluded: commemoration can allow contemporary application.[14] *Explicit* allusions to events from 478 to the early 20s[15] indicate no 'generic' ban on post-478 events. Positive arguments or criteria canvassed include:[16] the influence of contemporary events on Herodotus' becoming a 'historian'; his conception of the Persian Wars to the present as a continuous period;[17] need to appeal to contemporaries; devices that put audience/readership 'within the text'[18] (text as journey; metaliterary elements; 'tragic' narratives; 'internal audiences'); recurrent patterns that logically should include contemporary audience(s)/readers; the sense that the text

[7] How and Wells (1928) 1: 15–16; Focke (1927); Regenbogen (1930b); Bornitz (1968); Cobet (1971); Lateiner (1989) 4–5; cf. also note 9 and Ch. 11 in this volume.

[8] Flory (1980); Moles (1999); and Ch. 4 in this volume.

[9] Jacoby (1913); How and Wells (1928) 1: 9–15, 447–8; von Fritz (1936); Pohlenz (1937); Powell (1939); Myres (1953) 20–31; Lattimore (1958); Fornara (1971a) 1–23; 75–91; Marincola (1999).

[10] How and Wells (1928) 1: 6; Thuc. 1.22.4; Moles (1999); and see Ch. 1 in this volume.

[11] For this question, see Ch. 3 of this volume.

[12] Meyer (1899) 196–8; Fornara (1971a) 40–7, 60–74, 79–91; (1981) 152–3, 6; Redfield (1985) 115; Konstan (1987) 72; Lateiner (1987) 100; (1989) 47–8; Stadter (1992); Moles (1996) n. 99; *contra* de Ste. Croix (1973); Gould (1989) 116–20; Pritchett (1993) 328–53; van der Veen (1996) 71 n. 180, 91, 105 n. 266.

[13] Jacoby (1913) 229–32; How and Wells (1928) 1: 9, 448; Legrand (1966) 18–23; Fornara (1971a) 43 n. 13; (1971b); (1981); Cobet (1977); Smart (1977) 251–2; Evans (1979a); (1981); (1982); (1987); (1991) 89–90; Flory (1980) 23–6; MacDowell (1983) 151; Sansone (1985); Raaflaub (1987) 236 n. 40; Gould (1989) 18; Moles (1996) 280 n. 9; Pelling (2000) 154–5; both *c.* 426 and *c.* 415 have arguments (post-404 (Smart) is untenable).

[14] Stadter (1992) 782 n. 2; Moles (1996) 277; *pace* Gould (1989) 116–20.

[15] Schmid and Stachlin (1934 (1959)) I 2 590 n. 9; Fornara (1971a) 32–4; (1981) 149–51.

[16] Raaflaub (1987); Stadter (1992); Moles (1996).

[17] 6.98.1–3; Pohlenz (1937) 175–6; Fornara (1971a) 82 n. 10; Stadter (1992) 788–91; Moles (1996) 276.

[18] Lateiner (1989) 30–3.

variously anticipates the future; contemporary political vocabulary, slogans, debates, and national stereotypes; parallels and contrasts with contemporary events; temporal and spatial narrative dislocations; validation of implicit allusion by culminating explicit allusion; cumulative force of all these criteria. But implicit allusion requires both demonstration (through such criteria's practical implementation) and explanation of function.

This survey considers sections individually before comparing others, and, where isolated contemporary allusions are merely possible, it uses the verb 'might' (admitting 'might not'); but it also takes the sections sequentially, to allow the *possibilities* of organic interaction, consistent contemporary implication and coherent interpretation.

Croesus and Solon (1.5–33)[19]

In response to the prefatory question, 'for what cause (*aitiē*) Greeks and barbarians went to war against each other', Herodotus 'signals' 'the man whom I myself know to have "first-begun" (*huparxanta*) unjust deeds towards the Greeks': causality involves moral judgments. Then, 'I shall advance forwards in the account, going through small and great cities of men alike. For those that were anciently great, the majority of them have become small, and those that were[20] great in my time, were previously small' (1.5.3–4); this timeless concern with political rise and fall encourages perception of historical parallels, as well as suggesting a Panhellenic readership.[21] The man 'signalled' is 'Croesus, Lydian by race, son of Alyattes, *turannos* of the tribes this side of the Halys, . . . the first of the barbarians whom we know to have subjugated some of the Greeks to payment of tribute but to have befriended others. He subjugated the Ionians and Aeolians and the Dorians in Asia but befriended the Spartans; for before Croesus' "first-rule" (*arkhēs*), all the Greeks were free' (1.6). The struggle between freedom and tyranny/slavery is foregrounded, the former (seemingly) quintessentially Greek, the latter barbarian;

[19] Stadter (1992) 795–8; Moles (1996); Pelling (1997b).

[20] Temporally crucial: Moles (1996) 278–9 and Ch. 3 in this volume.

[21] Cf. e.g., 4.99, 7.139; Momigliano (1978) 60–1; Flory (1980); Raaflaub (1987) 235; Stadter (1992) 783 and n. 6.

and *arkhē* seems *intrinsically* unjust, cf. the interaction between *huparxanta* and *arkhēs*.[22]

Does this paradigm evoke the tribute-defined descendant of Croesus' empire, the contemporary 'tyrant city', Athens?[23] Herodotus' description of Alyattes' annual operations against Miletus (1.17.1–3), a sea power invulnerable to siege, might recall Spartan invasions of Attica.[24] The summary of the peoples 'subjugated' by Croesus (1.28.3) includes 'the Lydians': Croesus' tyranny is also 'internal'. Now, 'there arrive in Sardis, at the peak of her wealth, all the *sophistai* there happened to be at this time . . . and above all Solon, an Athenian' (1.29). This setting involves both spatial and temporal dislocations. Corrupt Greek 'sophists' flock east, to the capital that subjugates Greeks. Their numbers are vastly exaggerated. They are ambiguously associated with the incorruptible Solon, who represents (among much else) Herodotus himself, Odyssean wanderer, sightseer, visitor to Egypt, and Solonian moralist. This anachronistic encounter is fabricated after Odysseus and the Phaeacians[25] and dramatizes the arrival of Herodotus and numerous sophists in Athens, self-proclaimed imperial and cultural capital of Greece.

Since Solon's teaching is universal and its conclusion, 'you must look to the end of everything, to see how it will turn out' (1.32.9), is echoed by Herodotus (1.33), Athens comes within the frame. But more: Solon is Athenian; likewise 'the most blessed of humans', Tellos; 'Croesus' is an Athenian (Alcmaeonid) name; Solon's/Herodotus' denial of the possibility of total self-sufficiency, whether of individual or land (1.32.8), rebuts Athenian claims (made e.g., in the *Epitaphios*, including Pericles').[26] Croesus himself, arch-imperialist, treasurer, possessor of an Alcmaeonid name, king and tyrant, evokes Pericles, 'monarch' or 'tyrant',[27] of Athens. If Solon met Croesus, Herodotus met Pericles and judged him deluded. In this programmatic episode Herodotus warns the Athenians at their peak, his attitude to their empire radically negative.[28]

[22] For the play, cf. 8.142.2; Raaflaub (1987) 241–2.

[23] 3.89–97; 6.42; Thuc. 1.121.5; 122.2; 124.3; 2.8; 71.3; 3.63.3; Redfield (1985) 115; Raaflaub (1987) 224; Stadter (1992); Derow (1995) 45–6.

[24] Herodotus and the Archidamian War: Fornara (1971a) 75–91; (1981).

[25] *Od.* 7.134–13.87.

[26] Name: Moles (1996) 266; self-sufficiency: Thuc. 2.36.3; 41.1; Raaflaub (1987) 236 n. 40; Scanlon (1994) 145–56; Moles (1996) 267–9.

[27] 'Monarch': Thuc. 2.65.9; 'tyrant': Plu. *Per.* 3.5.

[28] For a different view, see Ch. 14, pp. 342–3 and note 45.

Peisistratus' Tyranny (1.56–64)[29]

Herodotus' history of mainland Greece begins by comparing Athens and Sparta. Seeking allies, Croesus 'inquires' who are the most powerful Greeks; Croesus' playing the historian invests his findings with Herodotus' own 'author-ity'[30] and brings the past closer. Anachronistically, Croesus 'finds' the most powerful to be the Lacedaemonians and Athenians (1.56), leaders respectively of the Dorians and Ionians, the former originally Greek and 'much-wandering', the latter Pelasgian, indigenous and non-Greek. Athens, under Peisistratus' tyranny, is militarily ineffective; Sparta, once worst governed of the Greeks, having obtained Lycurgan *eunomia*, is militarily strong. This reconstruction contrasts with the *Epitaphios* tradition (which Herodotus knew),[31] whereby the Athenians were always Greek, militarily superior to the Spartans and victorious over foreigners, having enjoyed democratic government since Theseus (the Peisistratid tyranny being a brief intermission), and must have surprised contemporaries.

The Peisistratus narrative utilizes standard motifs: triadic patterns (Chilon's three warnings to Peisistratus' father; the three rivals, of whom the youngest and seemingly weakest triumphs; Peisistratus' three *coups*); the trickster-figure whose deceptions include a beautiful woman; and contests between intelligence and stupidity. Details underscore Herodotus' typology of tyranny: perversion of nature[32] (the 'rending' of the body politic, the 'rooting' of the tyranny, the omen of Peisistratus' birth, the woman's name, Phue ('growth'),[33] Peisistratus' 'unlawful' intercourse); deception; popular gullibility; acquisition of a bodyguard; general military inactivity; co-operation with fellow tyrants.

These stock elements do not so much indicate poverty of information about sixth-century Athens (there are some hard facts, while others Herodotus deploys elsewhere) as reinforce the political analysis. Nor does the account, doubtless partly Alcmaeonid derived, evince Alcmaeonid bias: Peisistratus' tyranny is not represented, apologetically, as irresistible, nor Megacles' co-operation with Peisistratus' second *coup* concealed. The Peisistratus narrative subverts the Athenians'

[29] Gray (1997), bettering Lavelle (1993) 87–106; and see Ch. 23 in this volume.
[30] Naturally, Croesus *misunderstands* his 'findings'. On Croesus' *historiē*, see also Ch. 1 in this volume.
[31] 7.161.3; 9.27.
[32] Vernant (1982); Ogden (1997).
[33] Name-plays: Harrison (1998) n. 145.

self-image: Peisistratus' and Megacles' trick with Phue was 'far the most simple-minded ever since the Greeks were judged cleverer than barbarians', and this 'against the Athenians . . . said to be first of the Greeks in cleverness'. Throughout, Athenian credulity and inability to read signs contrast, implicitly, with Spartan cleverness. If the *History* is post-425 Peisistratus' purification of Delos (1.64) might evoke the Athenian purification of 426/5, itself modelled on Peisistratus',[34] the culminating contemporary allusion validating general 'contemporary' interpretation.[35] Certainly, contemporary preconceptions are systematically challenged.

The Peisistratids' expulsion (5.55–78)[36]

Herodotus agrees with Thucydides[37] that Athens was not liberated by Harmodius and Aristogeiton but by Spartan intervention orchestrated by the Alcmaeonids, who bribed the Pythia to tell the Spartans to liberate Athens. Nevertheless, the liberation is unequivocally good (5.62.1; 66.1) and causes an increase in Athenian greatness (5.66.1, 78.1). Yet Herodotus' account of Cleisthenes, 'founder of Athenian democracy', is unenamoured.[38] Reputedly the briber of the Pythia, Cleisthenes essayed reform only because, worsted in 'dynastic' struggle, he took the people into his 'party'. Moreover (5.67.1; 69.1), his reforms imitated his grandfather and namesake, the Sicyonian tyrant. As in the accounts of Peisistratus and Solon and Croesus, Alcmaeonid connections with tyranny are clear. At Isagoras' appeal, Cleomenes demands the expulsion of 'the Accursed', the Alcmaeonids and their allies who sacrilegiously killed Cylon, would-be tyrant before Peisistratus. Contemporaries might recall similar Spartan demands before the Peloponnesian War.

After Cleomenes' repulse, Herodotus enumerates the various Spartan invasions of Attica (5.76); readers might recall contemporary invasions. The continuous Athenian successes inspire Herodotus' celebration of 'equality of speech' (*isēgoriē*) (5.78): 'So the Athenians had

[34] Hornblower (1991) 519.
[35] Parallels between Peisistratid and Periclean Athens: Plu. *Per.* 7.1, 16.1.
[36] Strasburger (1955) 7–15, 18–19; Thomas (1989) 242–51, 261–82; Asheri (1997) 165–6.
[37] 1.20.2; 6.53–9.
[38] Strasburger (1955) 15; Fornara (1971a) 54–5.

grown. Equality of speech shows not in one thing only but everywhere that it is a worthwhile thing, if the Athenians too when tyrannized were better in matters of war than none of those who lived around them, but when they were freed of tyrants became far the first. These things show that when repressed they deliberately behaved basely, as working for a master, but when they were freed each himself wished to work for himself.' This passage praises 'equality', exemplified by Athens, but does not privilege Athenian democracy among forms of 'equality'.[39] As in the Peisistratus narrative, the links between internal political freedom and external power and between internal tyranny and external weakness are emphasized.

After discovering Alcmaeonid impiety, the Spartans feel that they have suffered doubly—having exiled their friends without securing Athenian gratitude, and they are disturbed by prophecies of many misfortunes from the Athenians; also, 'they saw the Athenians growing and not at all ready to obey them, considering that if the Attic race were free it would become of equal weight to their own, but if held down by tyranny weak and ready to obey their rule' (5.91). The consistent political analysis now includes Spartan-Athenian rivalry. The Spartans decide to reinstate Hippias with allied support. Only So(si)cles of Corinth voices disapproval, in the *History*'s longest single speech, evidently strategically placed.[40] He argues that promotion of tyranny would overturn previous Spartan policy and experience; Corinth had actually experienced tyranny. This account contains standard items of tyrannical typology: political repression, reversal of nature, physical abnormality and sexual misdemeanour; and an oracular comparison of Cypselus to a ravening lion. The otherwise unrecorded So(si)cles 'saves' the 'good fame' both of himself and Sparta, upholding 'equality of speech' and 'equal governments' against tyranny. Then Hippias, understanding the prophecies best, swears that one day the Corinthians above all will long for the Peisistratids. But the allies agree with So(si)cles and deter Sparta from further intervention (5.92–93).

The prophecies anticipate future events. Uncomfortable ironies accrue: had the Spartans been allowed to reinstate Athenian tyranny,

[39] Jacoby (1913) 357; How and Wells (1928) 2: 44; Strasburger (1955) 10; Fornara (1971a) 48–50; Romm (1998) 185–7; cf. 5.97.2 and 3.80; van der Veen (1996) 90 ff.

[40] Strasburger (1955) 7–15, 18–19; Stahl (1983); Raaflaub (1987) 223–4; Gray (1996); van der Veen (1996) 68–89; and see Ch. 23 in this volume.

they would have avoided the injustices inflicted on them by a free Athens; by behaving justly, the Corinthians incur, long-term, Athenian injustice. Readers might contrast the Peloponnesian conferences before the Peloponnesian War, when pre-eminently Corinth advocated war against a tyrannical Athens.[41] Certainly, Herodotus implies a paradox: a free Athens herself inflicted tyranny upon other Greek states. Further, these anticipations invest So(si)cles' admonition (5.92α2 'if you had experience of it like us, you would be able to make better decisions about it') with metaliterary force,[42] itself conducive to contemporary allusion.

The Alcmaeonids and Pericles (6.121–131)[43]

Herodotus defends the Alcmaeonids against the accusation of raising a shield to the Persians: the Alcmaeonids were pre-eminent tyrant-haters, in exile throughout the tyranny[44] and orchestrators of the Peisistratids' fall, if it was they who persuaded the Pythia to tell the Spartans to free Athens (thus Herodotus' previous account). Their high repute rules out their having had a grudge against the people. A shield *was* raised, but as to who raised it, Herodotus 'can say nothing further than these things' (6.121–4). The allusion to the Alcmaeonids' high repute segues (125.1) into an account of their history which proves their fame.

Herodotus' claim that the Alcmaeonids were *always* 'tyrant-haters' conflicts with his earlier account where Megacles co-operated with Peisistratus for a period (1.60–1). Is this conflict trivial? Is the earlier account forgotten? The claim also conflicts with the Alcmaeonid aspects of Croesus (1.29 ff.) and Cleisthenes' imitation of Cleisthenes of Sicyon (5.67, 69). Are these 'oral' inconsistencies? Is Herodotus' defence just rhetorical? The account of Alcmaeonid history has been variously interpreted, as: 'diversionary' after a thin defence;[45] favourable

[41] Thuc. 1.68–71; 119–24.

[42] Stadter (1992) 782.

[43] How and Wells (1928) 2: 115; Strasburger (1955) 15–18; Fornara (1971a) 53–6; Gillis (1979) 1–13, 45–58; Hart (1982) 1–16; Develin (1985); Thomas (1989) 247–51, 261–82; and see Ch. 23 in this volume.

[44] Alcmaeonid pleas: Isocrates 16.

[45] Gillis (1979) 51.

to the Alcmaeonids;[46] unfavourable;[47] the allusion to Pericles, the only explicit[48] allusion in Herodotus, as: *ad hoc.*, integral, neutral, honorific, ambiguous, and hostile.

The first item, Alcmaeon's assistance to Croesus' envoys at Delphi, recalls Alcmaeonid use of Delphi in their campaign to free Athens, but what of their association with Croesus, in the Solon-Croesus narrative 'tyrant' and 'subjugator' of Greeks? Does the story of Alcmaeon's exploitation of Croesus' generosity (whence Alcmaeonid wealth) recall Greek corruption at 1.29? The family was further elevated by 'the Sicyonian tyrant'. The two most favoured suitors of Cleisthenes' daughter are Athenians: Megacles, son of Alcmaeon, and Hippoclides, the latter through his ancestral relationship with the Cypselids. Mention of Megacles makes it harder to forget Herodotus' account of Peisistratus. After Hippoclides dances away his chances, Cleisthenes chooses Megacles: 'in this way the Alcmaeonids became talked about throughout Greece. From their marriage was born the Cleisthenes who established the tribes and democracy for the Athenians, having the name of his maternal grandfather the Sicyonian. To Megacles was born also Hippocrates and from Hippocrates another Megacles and another Agariste, having the name of Agariste daughter of Cleisthenes, who married Xanthippus the son of Ariphron and when she was pregnant saw a vision in her sleep: she thought that she had borne a lion. And after a few days she bore Xanthippus Pericles' (131.1–2). Alcmaeonid 'fame' climaxes in *Pericles* ('far-famed'),[49] but portents demand interpretation.

The account explicitly links the 'tyrant-hating' Alcmaeonids with tyrants, which renders implicit links plausible. Even as a royal symbol[50] the lion ill befits the Alcmaeonids *qua* pluralist democrats. But the oracle concerning Cypselus (5.92) also has 'bear a lion'; in the account's general intermixing of Alcmaeonids and tyrants 'Cypselids' are mentioned; images of unnaturalism suit tyrants; and in political

[46] Jacoby (1913) 238, 612.

[47] Strasburger (1955) 17; Thomas (1989) 271.

[48] Implicit allusions: e.g., 1.173.5 with Evans (1991) 93–4; 3.82.4 with Raaflaub (1987) 244 n. 58; Hornblower (1991) 346; 7.162.1 with Fornara (1971a) 83–4, *pace* Gould (1989) 118; also Polycrates: Raaflaub (1987) 244 n. 58.

[49] Forrest's 'Pericles was not an Alcmaeonid' ((1984) 4) is technically correct but contextually obtuse.

[50] How and Wells (1928) 2: 119.

debate in Attic comedy the lion can symbolize the tyrant: as in the Solon-Croesus narrative, Pericles is a tyrant.[51]

Herodotus' account conveys the Alcmaeonids' long co-operation with tyrants, both Greek and barbarian, to present times. This threatens the defence. The Alcmaeonids' role in Hippias' deposition is unaffected, but the specific accusation is strengthened. Either defence and account are inconsistent, or the account undermines the defence, which emerges as ironic.[52] Since the account is adroitly contextualized and its negative implications reinforced by interaction with earlier sections, aesthetics support the second interpretation. Hence the defence's closing ambiguity: 'I cannot say anything further than these things'; though 'these things' seemingly looks back, it also signposts the material undermining the defence.[53] Herodotus subtly subverts the Alcmaeonids' anti-tyrant credentials.

Praises of Athens[54]

Three strategically placed passages praise Athens:

(a) 7.138–9: the Persian campaign was against all Greece. Some Greeks medized, some refused. The Persians had to be opposed at sea. Whichever side Athens joined would have won. Athens saved Greece, because she chose freedom, energised resistance and withstood the invaders, despite frightening Delphic oracles. This judgment is the more emphatic for its acknowledged unpopularity and iconoclasm;[55] historically penetrating; and (like the other passages) strongly Panhellenist. Would the contemporary readership contrast the present-day tyrant-city?

(b) 8.2–3: the Spartan Eurybiades became overall commander, since the allies refused Athenian leadership. The Athenians conceded, 'correctly realizing that, if they had strife about leadership, Greece would be destroyed; for national strife is worse than concordant war to the same degree as war is worse than peace . . . and so long as they had strong need of them, they continued to yield. For when

[51] Strasburger (1955) 17; Thomas (1989) 271.
[52] Hart (1982) 12.
[53] *De* so used: Denniston (1954) 170.
[54] Kleinknecht (1940); Fornara (1971a) 46–7, 85–6; Hart (1982) 169–72; Demand (1987); Marincola (1996) 591 n. 28, 597 n. 50.
[55] See Ch. 1, p. 12 on Herodotus' use of *apodexis* in this connection.

having driven away the Persian they were already making the contest about his land, holding out Pausanias' violence as a pretext, they wrested the leadership from the Spartans'. This passage praises Athens' concession but finishes critically: the Athenians, always after the leadership, act duplicitously; further Spartan-Athenian dissension is foreshadowed. [56]

(c) When Mardonius offers the Athenians a Persian alliance, Herodotus gives the Athenians two speeches (8.143–4). The first (to Alexander of Macedon) champions liberty and perpetual enmity to the sacrilegious Xerxes. The second (to Spartan ambassadors) is nobler still: of many deterrents to medizing and enslaving Greece, the greatest is the destruction of Athens' temples and statues, but there are also the claims of Greek identity, shared blood, language, temples, sacrifices, and customs. Is this nobility ironized by the contemporary political context: Athens' subjugation of Greeks, peace with Persia, and her (and Sparta's) seeking Persian help in the Peloponnesian War? The textual context provides support. The Spartan remark—'you aroused this war, we not at all wishing it, and the contest was over your "first-beginning" (*arkhēs*)'[57]—brilliantly evokes the Croesean connection between 'first-beginning' and 'first-rule'; then, when the Athenians, albeit as a diplomatic ploy, threaten to ally with Persia and fight Greeks, their noble sentiments are compromised,[58] the inconcinnity reinforcing contemporary thoughts.

Themistocles

Herodotus' Themistocles is, uncontroversially, a 'new man', highly intelligent and far-sighted, a penetrating military analyst, persuasive, tricky, deceitful, venal, rapacious,[59] minatory, and conceited. But the portrayal has been variously adjudged inconsistent (through conflicting sources),[60] grudging (because of hostile sources),[61] fulfilling contemporary

[56] Strasburger (1955) 20; Raaflaub (1987) 240; Herodotus doubts Pausanias' medism: 5.32; cf. also 6.138–40: Derow (1995) 48–9.

[57] 8.142; the *paradosis* convinces: Fornara (1971a) 84 n. 14; How and Wells *ad loc.* are unsubtle.

[58] Fornara (1971a) 85–6; van der Veen (1996) 105–8.

[59] Barth (1965); Marr (1998) 88.

[60] Bruns (1896) 89; Masaracchia (1977) xx.

[61] How and Wells (1928) 1: 42–3; Marr (1998) 4–5.

expectations, a 'literary construct', unified,[62] ambiguous,[63] and historically just.[64] Three sections are critical.

(a) Themistocles enters after Herodotus' claim that the Athenians saved Greece, when the Athenians are debating the second Delphic oracle: 7.143 'there was of the Athenians a man newly (*neōsti*) advancing into the first men, whose name (*men*) was Themistocles, and/but (*de*) he was called the son of Neocles'. There follow Themistocles' positive oracular interpretation, his proposal that the Athenians prepare to fight at sea and an earlier intervention: 7.144 'another opinion of Themistocles before this prevailed opportunely, when, many monies having accrued to the Athenians in the public treasury, monies which came to them from the mines at Laurion, they were about to share them out amongst themselves at ten drachmas each; on that occasion Themistocles persuaded the Athenians to desist from this division and to make two hundred ships from these monies for the war, adducing the one against the Aeginetans. For the occurrence of this war saved Greece on that occasion, compelling the Athenians to become sea people. The ships were made but were not used but in this way accrued to Greece at the necessary moment. These ships, then, having been previously made, were available to the Athenians and it was necessary to make others. They resolved in their debate after the oracle to receive the barbarian oncoming into Greece with their ships in full force, obeying the god, together with those of the Greeks who wished'.

Themistocles' 'new' prominence allegedly depreciates Themistocles' earlier career, from his 493 archonship, and his family.[65] But why 'whose *name* was Themistocles and/but he *was called* the son of Neocles'? Herodotus, *nomen/omen* specialist, plays[66] on *neōsti, name, Neo/cles, Themisto/cles* and *called* (*ekaleeto*): his *arriviste* name ('son of "New-fame" ') is less true of him than 'Themistocles', which means 'famed for his rightness' or 'rightly famed/named'. Herodotus 'redefines' Themistocles by his intrinsic worth, fulfilling the *Preface*'s project of

[62] The latter three: Fornara (1971a) 66–74.

[63] Strasburger (1955) 21–2, cf. Fornara (1971a) 66; Konstan (1987) 70–2; Romm (1998) 187–9.

[64] Hart (1982) 150–2; Evans (1991) 75–80.

[65] How and Wells (1928) 1: 42; Hornblower (1991) 139; Marr (1998) 69–71; *contra* Davies (1971) 213.

[66] Other literary defences: Fornara (1971a) 68; Evans (1987) (parallel with Mardonius: 6.43); (1971) 75; full exposition: Moles (2000).

heroic naming/faming: *klea andrōn*. But a *new arrival*'s immediately scaling the political heights is additionally praiseworthy: Herodotus also 'redefines' 'New-fame' as 'Young-fame'.[67] Doubtless, a hostile source provided misleading facts, but Herodotus' virtuosic punning subverts their implications.

Chapter 144 is also held depreciatory, on the ground that Themistocles thinks only of the Aeginetan war, whereas Thucydides has him already foreseeing the Persian threat.[68] But Herodotus' subtle wording allows the latter possibility (Aegina being Themistocles' *public* argument) and 144 is wholly laudatory. *Qua* ideal statesman, Themistocles alone counsels 'opportunely'. His opinion concerns the Aeginetan war,[69] which 'saved Greece, compelling the Athenians to become sea people', just as at 139.5 'the Athenians were saviours of Greece'; the ships he caused to be built 'accrued to Greece at the necessary moment'; on Themistocles' second intervention, in 481, the Athenians accepted his interpretation, and resolved to 'receive the barbarian oncoming into Greece', just as at 139.6 'they stayed and endured to receive the oncoming invader of the land'. The interaction between Herodotus' own claim and the narrative creates a causal chain: the Aeginetan war, the building of the navy, the Athenians' acceptance of Themistocles' interpretation of the oracle and their heroic stand, a chain whose single and brilliant artificer is Themistocles.

(b) At Salamis, when news of Athens' sack impels some of the generals to prepare immediate departure and the rest to plan defence of the Isthmus, Mnesiphilus arrives by night, argues the decision's folly—the Greeks, no longer fighting for one fatherland, will scatter and Greece will be destroyed—and urges Themistocles to get the decision reversed (8.56–7). Is this fictitious intervention to Themistocles' discredit or does it create dramatic emphasis?[70]

Mnesiphilus' almost divine intervention *is* dramatic. But his analysis is cogent, reprising the arguments of 7.138–9 (Herodotus himself) and 8.2–3 (the Athenians' insight). (Themistocles' reluctance to

[67] Debate over the meaning of 'Neocles': Harvey (1980); Bicknell (1982); Romm (1998) 187.

[68] Hornblower (1991) 48, 138–9.

[69] Itself, paradoxically, inglorious: van der Veen (1996) 100–2.

[70] How and Wells (1928) 1: 42; 2: 254, 378; Hignett (1963) 204; Fornara (1971a) 72 n. 19; Marincola (1996) 595–6 n. 18; Pelling (1997); Marr (1998) 74.

use these arguments publicly is dictated, as Herodotus notes, by tact.) Themistocles' reaction is exemplary. Almost uniquely, the worldly leader heeds his wise warner well, his 'pleasure' connotes not delusion but understanding, and there follows a contest between intelligence (Mnesiphilus/Themistocles) and mere power ('Eurybiades'), and their successful fusion: Themistocles himself assumes the role of adviser to Eurybiades. At council, Themistocles, after initial overenthusiasm, shows further tact in his handling of Adimantus and appeals to Eurybiades' military pride; his military analysis is powerful, reflecting both the experience of Artemisium and 'good counsel' (instead of 'counsel-lessness'), and angled to Spartan self-interest. Only when stung by Adimantus' further racist jibes does Themistocles abuse him and the Corinthians, menace them with the Athenian fleet, threaten Eurybiades with Athenian migration, and again appeal to his better nature. The threat, opines Herodotus, decided Eurybiades in Themistocles' favour (8.58–63). Themistocles judiciously blends tact, appeal, hard military analysis, and threats. His climactic words before Eurybiades 'learns' aright (8.62: 'you Spartans, *isolated from allies such as us*, will *remember* my words') emphasize that the *philia* that should bind *all* Greece, not just individual *patrides*, is the key to success. His effective assimilation with 'Mnesiphilus' ('remembering *philoi*') clinches his credit. Again, Herodotus, accepting a hostile source's 'facts', overturns their implications. The sole negative is the threatened use of Athenian sea power against other Greek states, particularly Corinth, which, while a rhetorical ploy, might have uncomfortable contemporary resonances.

When the Greeks again lose resolve, Themistocles employs another trick, secretly sending Sicinnus to urge immediate Persian attack. The trick is justified by results, but might recall Themistocles' future dealings with Persia. The intervention of Aristides, with his news of Persian encirclement, enacts the historian's own role, enhancing Aristides' 'authority', and replays Mnesiphilus' intervention. Aristides' insistence, welcomed by Themistocles, that the two sublimate their personal *stasis* into (as it were) patriotic *stasis*, enacts on the personal and Athenian levels the need to overcome *stasis* within Greece against the common enemy. Herodotus' judgment (8.79) that *Aristides* ('best in appearance') *was* 'the best and most just man ever produced by Athens'[71] underlines his *moral* superiority. Nevertheless, Themistocles

[71] Cf. also Plu. *Arist.* 3; Timocr. 410.

again responds excellently to external intervention. Then, at embarkation, Themistocles 'of all spoke right sentiments' in a speech of notable moral and philosophical weight. His *logos* everywhere excels (8.74–83).

(c) Themistocles dominates the debate whether to cut Xerxes off.[72] Themistocles advocates this but when Eurybiades' counter-argument, that it would be safer to let Xerxes escape and fight over Xerxes' own land, wins Peloponnesian support, Themistocles addresses the Athenians, the most annoyed at the enemy's escape and the keenest to sail to the Hellespont, if necessary alone. He switches, arguing that the defeated are dangerous, that the Greek victory was lucky, and that not they but the gods defeated the impious Xerxes. They should return home and sail for the Hellespont in the spring. When he then contacts Xerxes (unhistorically), claiming to have dissuaded the Greeks from cutting him off, his 'intention was to make a deposit to the Persian, in order that if any disaster should overtake him from the Athenians, he should have a refuge to turn to; which indeed occurred': clearly glossing[73] his ostracism and flight to Persia (8.108–10). Themistocles' behaviour embraces the patriotic and militarily penetrating, the pragmatic, the self-interested and the duplicitous, but this duplicity reflects foresight, not yet treachery to Greece (the campaign will resume). The Athenians are persuaded: now that 'having in the past been thought clever and of good counsel, he had been shown to be truly clever and of good counsel, they were ready to be persuaded by him in all circumstances' (8.110). Themistocles' name again speaks true.

The siege of Andros, a Panhellenic operation, as Herodotus belatedly implies, is dominated by Themistocles, his rapacity, the largely Athenian fleet and secret exactions from other islands (8.111–12). After the allusion to his ostracism and flight to Persia, these activities must reflect Athenian brutalities towards the Delian League and the speed of their inception.[74] Nevertheless, Themistocles receives due honour, both at the Isthmus (implicitly) and at Sparta (unequivocally): *Themistocles*, rightly named both at the beginning and end of his narrative (8.123–4). Herodotus' text, triumphing over his sources' bias, acclaims Themistocles cleverest of all Greeks and saviour of

[72] Marr (1998) 112–13.

[73] *Pace* Fornara (1971a) 71–2.

[74] Strasburger (1955) 21; Immerwahr (1966) 200 n. 29; Raaflaub (1987) 227, 239.

Greece against Persia. But the genuinely negative elements—the bribery, rapacity, self-interest, incipient medism, proto-imperialist bully-boy tactics, though source-derived, are not source-driven. Herodotus' Themistocles is a unity, the negatives the obverse of the positive, an Odyssean or Promethean figure,[75] Athens' outstanding leader, seen both in his time and in his future, paradigmatic also of Persian-war and later Athens.[76]

Athens at the end of the war[77]

At Mycale, the last battle, 'Ionia *revolted* from the Persians for the second time' (9.104); the narrative rings back, *via* the Ionian Revolt, to Croesus' original conquest. But closure fails. Herodotus' enumeration of the best fighters includes Hermolycus, killed a few years later in war with Carystus (9.105): a possible contrast between the Panhellenic struggle and Athenian imperialism. The debate about whether to transplant the Ionians or protect them *in situ* problematizes Greece's boundaries (9.106) and rings back to Bias' 'most useful' proposal after the Persian conquest,[78] but again the narrative advances: the Athenians asserting their rights over their colonists, and the Samians, Chians, Lesbians, and other islanders joining the alliance and *swearing not to revolt*: from one *arkhē* into another . . . The story of Masistes[79]—one of sexual and political intrigues and misdemeanours and barbarous cruelty—reaffirms Xerxes as tyrant, rings back to Gyges and Candaules and anticipates Xerxes' downfall (9.108–13). The allusion to Protesilaus (9.116) rings back to the very beginnings of Greek-barbarian conflict,[80] and again problematizes boundaries. The omen of the leaping salt fish (9.120) rings back to Cyrus' negotiations with the Ionians and portends Ionia's escape

[75] Fornara (1971a) 72–3; Evans (1991) 78, 80.

[76] Konstan (1987) 72.

[77] Lateiner (1989) 46–50, 132–5; Herington (1991a); Stadter (1992) 791–4, 798; Derow (1995) 34–51; Moles (1996); Dewald (1997); Pelling (1997b); (2000) 354. Space and dating imponderables marginalize the case that the Persians sometimes reflect the later Athenians: e.g., Fornara (1971a) 84 n. 13; Hunter (1982) 254–7; Raaflaub (1987) 228–9, 236 n. 40; cf. Rood (1999) 150.

[78] 1.170.1, cf. 5.106, 124; 6.22.

[79] Wolff (1964); Marincola (1996) 601 n. 51.

[80] Boedeker (1988); Marincola (1996) 601 n. 52.

from Persian enslavement: but the fish are cooked. The punishment of the cruel and sacrilegious Persian governor of Sestus, Artayctes, itself just and precisely calibrated both spatially (on Xerxes' bridges into Europe) and temporally (as requital for Persian sacrilege from Artayctes and Xerxes back to the original maltreatment of Protesilaus), is conducted by Xanthippus in a form that might pre-echo Pericles' vengeance against Samos in 440[81] and includes his son's stoning before Artayctes' eyes (9.120): shades of Xerxes. Nor will the Athenians accept this geographical division. The narrative close—'and in this year nothing further than these things was done'—intimates that 'further' things will be done.

The concluding story of Artembares, Artayctes' grandfather, and the advice or warning of Cyrus (9.122),[82] recapitulates major themes and rings multiply with the beginning: back to the beginning of Persian expansion to empire from poor beginnings, to Croesus, to the eternal struggle between ruling and slavery. But Cyrus' warning is flawed—he himself ignored it—and in one sense misdirected, because he does not give it to the Persians at the proper narrative moment. So, implicitly, the warning is Herodotus' and includes Athens,[83] the coming imperial power, already at the *History*'s end pushing against the re-established and natural geographical boundaries, already erupting beyond the textual boundaries. The series of ring structures enacts the close of one 'cycle' and the beginning of another.

Conclusions

While emphasizing that Athenian support of the Ionian Revolt ultimately caused the Persian invasion,[84] Herodotus hails the Athenians—particularly Themistocles—as Greece's saviours and Athenian greatness as deriving from political freedom. Both judgments attest admiration for Persian-war Athens, as well as remarkable historical penetration, independence, and impartiality, particularly in contemporary circumstances. Admiration includes objectivity. Herodotus does not

[81] Plu. *Per.* 28.2; also Hdt. 7.33: Derow (1995) 38.
[82] Gould (1989) 58–60; Raaflaub (1987) 244–6.
[83] Moles (1996) 275.
[84] 5.97.3, 105.1; 7.1.1; 8.142.2; van der Veen (1996) 90 ff.

conceal—he underlines—Athens' early jostling for Greek hegemony; his portrait of city and leader contains negatives and ominous prefigurations.

Not only does Athens contribute most to Persia's defeat: she is foregrounded in the *History*'s architecture. Initially, Sardis, Lydia, and Croesus represent (*inter multa alia*) Athens, her empire and Pericles; Herodotus' first treatment of mainland Greece, a sustained comparison of Athens and Sparta, subverts contemporary preconceptions; the *History* ends with Athens driving the Greek war-effort and herself reaching towards empire. Prospective allusions, explicit and implicit, establish the contemporary political world as an important sub-text and a dominant context for the text's reception.

Why? The question becomes more urgent because Herodotus' history of events between *c.* 560 and 479/8 (with retrospects) and their causes, is also a timeless examination of the political process of rise and fall. Herein, the *History* concerns the Athenian empire as much as Lydia or Persia, and So(si)cles' remarks apply to any readers. Solon's/Herodotus' advice to 'look to the end of every thing' logically includes 'things' beyond the 'end' of the *History*, an 'end' which, appropriately, is both an end and not an 'end'. The timeless frame necessarily encompasses contemporary Athens, and the *History*'s timelessness is immediately validated by its relevance to a context outside its chronological limits. But since this relevance is conveyed by implicit rather than explicit allusions, it poses readers interpretative challenges, like those faced by figures within the text, thereby reinforcing another important aspect of Herodotus' project: its practical usefulness. The implicit prospective allusions also extend Herodotus' investigation of causality, from 'why things happened then' to 'why we are where we are now'. (Herodotus preempts Thucydides I!) But why is Athens *so* important?

Fundamental to the *History* is the struggle between political freedom and enslavement. Freedom is initially conceptualized as Greek and good, slavery/tyranny as barbarian and bad. The *History* is full of tyrants, so named or of similar type, and tyranny features in the Constitutional Debate. True, most of the tyrants in the *History* are Greek; not all tyrants are bad or not always; some produce 'great and wonderful achievements'; and there is debate whether 'tyrant' and cognates are necessarily pejorative in Herodotus.[85] Hence some

[85] How and Wells (1926) 2: 338–47; Ferrill (1978); Vernant (1982); Gammie

see the initial conceptualizations as problematized: wrongly. That ideals are compromized in practice, while 'disturbing', 'challenging' etc., does not impugn the ideals. Herodotus' theoretical position is radically anti-tyrant: tyrants subjugate their own people and stunt their growth; they are a perversion of nature; they, or their descendants, are appropriately overthrown (e.g., 3.142.1; 7.164). Many contemporary Greeks saw the Athenian empire as Persia's tyrannical successor. Hence the paradoxical concept of 'the tyrant city'; a concept which Herodotus applies, implicitly, to Athens. Herodotus admires Athens *qua* saviour of Greece but condemns the empire: a position consistent with two other aspects of his thinking: hatred of war[86] (for which Athens bore most responsibility in fifth-century Greece) and genuine Panhellenism.[87]

True also, Herodotus celebrates the growth of Athenian power after the Peisistratids' expulsion; such 'growth' led to 'tyranny'; and the *History* repeatedly allows a voice to the 'rule-or-be-ruled' existential choice so familiar from Thucydides.[88] The answer remains the same: the Athenian 'tyranny' was different because it controlled *systematically* and exacted *tribute*; Sparta's control over her allies was much looser.[89] Nor is tyranny's 'growth' *inevitable*: it is a *perverted* growth. Herodotus does not himself endorse the rule-or-be-ruled *apologia* beloved of tyrants. It is not 'tragically *inevitable*' that people should aggressively impose servitude on others[90] (or that others let them):[91] they *choose* to do so, when, Herodotus rightly thinks, they are wrong.[92]

Two further factors inform Herodotus' judgment of contemporary Athens.

Firstly, Athens' tyranny is also 'internal'. If that estimation of Pericles' power underestimates Athens' democratic mechanisms, it

(1986); Hartog (1988) 322–89; Lateiner (1989) 154–5, 166–7, 170–85; Ogden (1997); *contra* Waters (1971); Gray (1996) 364–6; van der Veen (1996) 66–89; Dewald (2002).

[86] E.g., 5.97.3; 6.98; 8.3.1; Cobet (1986).

[87] E.g., 1.6; 7.138–9; 8.3.1–2; 8.143–4; Mitchell (2000).

[88] E.g., 5.105.2; Hdt. 1.46.1, 71.4, 207.3; 6.98.2; 7.11.2–3; Asheri (1997).

[89] Not that Sparta is 'innocent': cf. 1.6 (friendship with Croesus); 1.68.6; section 3; 6.98.2 'the leaders warring over the *arkhē*'; Lateiner (1989) 133; Stadter (1992) 809; van der Veen (1996) 108–10; Herodotus on Sparta is another, less critical, story.

[90] *Pace* Fornara (1971a) 78.

[91] E.g., 3.143.2; 6.11–12; Stadter (1992) 803–8.

[92] E.g., 1.5.3, 206; 3.21.2; 6.98.2.

was a widespread contemporary view, although, as by Thucydides, it could be glossed positively. Nor was it naive to associate Pericles with Athenian imperial tyranny.

Secondly, both Solon's encounter with Croesus and the *History*'s end include implicit warnings to the Athenians. Why warn an established imperialist, especially when, like Thucydides, the *History* acknowledges the practical dangers of *relinquishing* tyranny?[93] But such warnings (paralleling the numerous explicit warnings to more or less tyrannical figures throughout the text) matter. They may prevent greater excesses: it would have been worthwhile averting Melos or the Sicilian Expedition, both for Athens' suffering enemies and for herself; it is something if even the profoundly deluded make some moral progress (as Croesus, even Xerxes, do, before their falls). The obliquity with which the warnings are conveyed also signifies: both to provoke thought and to illustrate the relatively safest and best way of warning tyrants.[94] Should the warnings fail, they may deter future readers, because they can learn from the Athenians' demonstrated folly and consequent overthrow. The process will also validate both the *History*'s usefulness and Herodotus' prescience. It is astonishing, but morally pregnant, that when the Athenians first appear, they are stupid.[95]

Athens is in the *History*'s *conception*: the Athenian empire/tyranny turned Herodotus to history-writing.[96] Among the many sources of the *History*'s greatness is its moral seriousness, including advocacy of political freedom, at least within the Greek world. Athens is not thereby the *History*'s *central* concern: she is a paradigm of universal processes, albeit for contemporaries the sharpest one.[97]

[93] E.g., 3.143; Thuc. 2.63.1 f.; Raaflaub (1987) 226.

[94] Hohti (1974); Lateiner (1989) 184; Moles (1996) 269–70.

[95] The more strikingly, *if* the *History* dates to *c.* 415.

[96] Meyer (1899) 198; Fornara (1971a) 44–5, 86–91; Meier (1973/80) 427 ff.; (1987) 51–4.

[97] I thank: the Liverpool Seminar (7/12/99); NECROS (8/12/99); Franco Basso; Bob Fowler; Lynette Mitchell; Chris Pelling; Peter Rhodes; Tony Woodman; and Irene de Jong.

CHAPTER THREE

ORAL STRATEGIES IN THE LANGUAGE OF HERODOTUS

Simon R. Slings

It is a platitude to say that Herodotus stands on the watershed between the oral and literate phases of Greek culture. Many idiosyncrasies of his style suggest that he stands in a tradition of telling stories, and that the written language in his time was only in its infancy. The challenge is to turn this impressionistic triviality into scholarship. One branch of linguistics, called Discourse Analysis, may help us out here. Most linguistic studies are concerned with language as a system, the *langue* in Saussurean terms. But Discourse Analysis typically focuses on the concrete manifestations of the system, the *parole*. Discourse Analysis is first and foremost a part of the study of living languages, in which it analyses linguistic behaviour in certain communicative situations. But its results may also be applied, and have been applied with great success, to texts, literary or otherwise.

Now, it is of course a drawback that Ancient Greek is not a living language, even though few classical scholars seem aware of the extent of the limits which this sets on our knowledge. But even though the real spoken language of the Greeks is lost irretrievably, there is no need for a confession of total *aporia*. First, we do have an ample corpus of people portrayed in conversation: tragedy, comedy (old and new), philosophical dialogue. And secondly, even though each language is different from all others, there are some universals of oral speech which there is no good reason to doubt were true of Ancient Greek as well. So by dint of careful extrapolation from Discourse Analysis of oral use of modern languages and comparison with the corpus of quasi-spoken language preserved from Ancient Greek we may try to learn something more concrete on Herodotus' place in the oral/written continuum.

There are several ways of doing this. One way would be to concentrate on what I have elsewhere called 'downslip'. It is a characteristic of all spoken language, as we can observe daily ourselves,

that speakers tend to start sentences of a relatively complex structure; in the course of the sentence the structure proves too complex, so the speaker shifts to a more simple structure. Downslip creates all sorts of anacolutha: from part to whole, from paraphrasis to the entity that is paraphrased, from indirect to direct speech, from infinitive to finite verb, from subordinate clause to main clause, and from marked case (dative, genitive) to unmarked case (accusative, nominative). I have studied downslip in Homer and in Plato (Slings (1994) and (1997a), respectively). In the present study I will concentrate not on such involuntary phenomena but on strategies used on purpose in oral language to make information more accessible.

The primary difference between speech and text, oral and written language, is the organization of its units. In text, there is a central syntactic unit, the main clause: the writer is at liberty to add subsidiary information in various types of embedded clauses, which are organized around the central unit.[1] By contrast, speech has as its basic unit the *chunk*, a unit which in spoken language is recognizable by its intonation pattern, and which is therefore often called intonation unit.[2] These intonation units are information units at the same time: sometimes they give new information (Focus) about an already given entity or state of affairs (Topic): in these cases the information unit is a clause. In other cases information units consist of one constituent only; if so, they precede a clause and help to understand it (Theme) or follow it and give additional comment or information (Tail). For instance:[3]

(1) As for John$_{\text{THEME}}$, he$_{\text{TOPIC}}$ ran away$_{\text{FOCUS}}$, the poor chap$_{\text{TAIL}}$.

It is perhaps the most typical property of the flow of information in speech that 'the density of information packing in spoken language is appropriate for the listener to process comfortably' (Brown and Yule (1983) 18). (1) is an illustration of how what might be a feasi-

[1] This is a simplification in that some subordinate clauses, for example restrictive relative clauses, cannot be said to provide subsidiary information; vice versa, not all main clauses contain foreground information, for example main clauses introduced by means of the particles γάρ and, to a certain extent, μέν. But as a rough outline of the entirely different principles of organization of speech and text, the above may suffice.

[2] With the following, cf. Bakker (1997a) 47–8; Slings (1999) 61–2; (2000) 21–5.

[3] See Slings (1999) 61–2 for further analysis of this example.

ble text sentence 'Poor John ran away' is chunked into three separate information units.

Of course these two ways of using language are not mutually exclusive. Any given stretch of units can have speech and text properties (cf. Bakker (1997a) 8–9), and this is what we should certainly expect to find in Herodotus. But within the bounds of this study the only way to locate him more precisely within the speech/text continuum[4] is to concentrate on some of the most distinctive features of speech and text, and I will deal with the former.[5]

Speech Exemplified

To illustrate some features of speech, I will quote the beginning of the story of Gyges and Candaules' wife (1.8.1), split up in chunks, with some comments.

(2a) Οὗτος δὴ ὢν ὁ Κανδαύλης ἠράσθη τῆς ἑωυτοῦ γυναικός

Now this Candaules was in love[6] with his own wife[7]

Candaules had first been mentioned at 1.7.2: 'There was one Candaules, whom the Greeks call Myrsilus, a descendant of Alcaeus son of Heracles', a sentence which starts with *ēn (Kandaulēs)*, a favourite device in Greek to introduce new Discourse Topics, cf. Dik (1995) 221–8. It seems to me typical of Herodotus' style that the precise status of this verb is often difficult to determine when so used. Here I would prefer to analyse it as the main verb, not the copula, which is why I do not translate: 'C. was tyrant of Sardes'.[8]

After Candaules' first mention comes an embedded sequence, giving subsidiary information to link Candaules with Alcaeus, marked

[4] Cf. Slings (1999) for an attempt to place Bacchylides in this continuum.

[5] On the textuality of Herodotus, see Rösler, this volume (Ch. 4).

[6] I disagree with the traditional analysis of the aorist ἠράσθη as ingressive. If the aorist of a verb with stative 'Aktionsart' is to be interpreted as referring to the beginning of that state, there must be clear signals in the context that a state begins. Since this is not the case here, I prefer to take the aorist indicative as presenting a state in the remote past as an event that took place in the past ('complexive aorist').

[7] Translations from Herodotus are my own, and are as literal as possible in order to highlight the strategies used. But I owe a debt of gratitude to Waterfield's translation, from which I have taken over a phrase here and there.

[8] Cf. below, the analysis of (2e).

by the PUSH particle *gar* at 1.7.2. This embedded sequence ends at the end of 1.7.4, and in (2a) the main narrative line is resumed by means of the POP particle *ōn*.[9] The pronoun *houtos* selects Candaules as Topic of this clause, a strategy which is very common indeed after an entity has been introduced as a new Discourse Topic; our instance is slightly atypical because of the embedded sequence that comes between the first mention of Candaules (in 1.7.2 as quoted above) and clause (2a), in which he is first assigned Topic function. The Focus of the clause is of a relatively rare type called complex Focus (cf. Dik (1995) 29–30; 71–3): 'he was in lóve, with his ówn wife'.

(2b) ἐρασθεὶς δὲ
being in love

This is probably to be taken as a Theme, preceding the clause proper, although it could also be part of the clause, in which case we would have to assign it the pragmatic function called Setting or Orientation. In any case, this type of repetition of the main verb of the preceding clause by means of a participle of the same verb, which is one of the best-known features of Herodotus' style (cf. Fehling (1969) 147–8; Müller (1980) 61–3), is one of several phenomena which bring about clause linking, known in Discourse Analysis as tail/head links. The close-knit succession of information units is typical of speech. Participial tail/head linking is also a way of announcing Topic continuity: the reader/listener is prepared for the next information unit to be about Candaules as well.

(2c) ἐνόμιζέ οἱ εἶναι γυναῖκα πολλὸν πασέων καλλίστην
he believed he had the most beautiful wife in the world

Since this information unit contains an embedded clause, the word order is different from the one in simple clauses. For main clauses, Helma Dik has discovered the ordering rule Topic—Focus—Predicate—X[10] (1995). Within the embedded clause, the pronoun *hoi*, which refers to the Discourse Topic, has a position determined by Wackernagel's Law. *Einai gunaika* is inferable from or given by the

[9] A PUSH is a place where an embedded sequence begins, a POP one where it ends. For an illustration of 'embedded' and 'embedding', see below, the discussion of example (16). For further details on PUSH/POP analysis, cf. Slings (1997b) 101–4. See also Bakker (1997a) 112–15 on γάρ and οὖν as well as de Jong (1997).

[10] 'X' stands for pragmatically unmarked constituents.

preceding discourse, and as such these words precede the Focus *pollon paseōn kallistēn*.[11]

(2d) ὥστε δὲ ταῦτα νομίζων
as he believed this

Another participial tail/head link, slightly unusual in that Herodotus far more often uses aorist participles than present ones to link clauses.[12]

(2e) ἦν γάρ οἱ τῶν αἰχμοφόρων Γύγης Δασκύλου ἀρεσκόμενος μάλιστα
among his guards was Gyges son of Dascalus, who pleased him most

Gar indicates a PUSH: the narrator interrupts himself to give background information, which is necessary for the reader/listener to understand the flow of the story. When such an embedded sequence actually causes a syntactic break in the governing sequence, this is called 'background repair' (cf. Schiffrin (1987) 300–1). In this case there is probably no break, depending on whether (2d) is considered a separate unit or not (see the analysis of (2b)). But an interruption there certainly is. Herodotus is probably the Greek author who makes most use of 'parenthetic *gar*'.

The background sequence here serves to introduce a new Discourse Topic ('presentative clause').[13] As we already have seen, such clauses often start with *ēn*. In this case, there is, besides, a deviation from normal word order. We have here to do with what I have elsewhere called 'crescendo sentence' (Slings (1992) 99 n. 19), a clause in which every next constituent contains more information than the preceding. Here the information load of *ēn* is almost nil, *tōn aiklmophorōn* names the group to which the Discourse Topic belongs, and only with the Focus *Gugēs ho Daskulou* does the clause do its job.[14] Again,

[11] Perhaps εἶναι γυναῖκα is Topic of the embedded clause; cf. Dik (1995) 207–35 on predicates as Topics, and (1995) 229 on the status of 'dummy Topic' of existential εἶναι. Of course, this case is different in that I would prefer to take both constituents together as Topic, a possibility argued for by Dik (1995) 69–70 ('extended Topic').

[12] But cf. 5.42.2 ὥστε ὢν οὕτω φρονέων. An investigation of the pragmatic functions of the so-called participle particles ὥστε, οἷον, οἷα, and ἅτε will no doubt be very rewarding, but falls outside of the scope of the present study.

[13] As often in Herodotus, cf. Stein (1883) 12, who cites seven more instances from Book One alone.

[14] The order of constituents may, however, be reconciled with Dik's rule if it is assumed, first that ἦν has Topic function ('dummy Topic', see above n. 11); and,

the main Discourse Topic is referred to by means of *hoi*, which is placed according to Wackernagel's Law.

It cannot be made out with certainty whether *areskomenos malista* is an information unit by itself (a Tail) or not, although I have analysed the word order on the assumption that it is not. Herodotus' predilection for fuzzy syntax, especially with regard to *ēn*, in presentative clauses, makes it impossible for us to determine whether *ēn* is the existential verb ('there was among his guards', 'to his guards belonged') or a periphrastic auxiliary (*ēn . . . areskomenos* = *ēresketo*). It could well be the latter, if one assumes that the periphrastic construction was used precisely because of the fact that Gyges is here first introduced. If so, the fuzziness reflects one of the main traits of oral language use, to wit dual functionality:[15] *ēn* would then be both. But the clause would then be crammed with new information (*tōn aikhmophorōn, Gugēs ho Daskulou, areskomenos malista*), which is rather avoided in oral language use, so perhaps it is best to take *areskomenos malista* as a separate information unit.

(2f) τούτῳ τῷ Γύγῃ καὶ τὰ σπουδαιέστερα τῶν πρηγμάτων ὑπερετίθετο ὁ Κανδαύλης

to this Gyges Candaules confided his more serious business

At the POP corresponding to the PUSH of the previous clause, the new Discourse Topic is brought in as clause Topic, by means of the pronoun *houtos*, as in (2a). Note that this is also a form of tail/head link: the identity of the clause Topic with the new Discourse Topic links the two clauses (2e) and (2f), and the repetition of the proper name underlines this. The clause Topic is followed by the Focus *ta spoudaiestera tōn prēgmatōn*, which is modified by (corresponsive) *kai*— this particle serves at the same time as a forward link, in that it prepares the reader/listener for another entity, to be put on a par with 'the more serious business'. The predicate follows the Focus, and *ho Kandaulēs* is put in the X-position as pragmatically unmarked information. Very often, as here, this is given information which the author could have suppressed but inserts in order to enhance the cohesion of the clause complex.

second, that a Setting (in this case τῶν αἰχμοφόρων) may be placed between Topic and Focus, as I have argued in Slings (1997a) 173 n. 14. For another possible exception, see the discussion of example (13) below.

[15] Cf. Slings (1994) 414–20; (2000) 23–4.

(2g) καὶ δὴ καὶ τὸ εἶδος τῆς γυναικὸς ὑπερεπαινέων
praising abundantly more in particular his wife's beauty

There is a syntactic incongruence here, inasmuch as the participle *huperepaineōn* corresponds pragmatically to *huperetitheto* in (2f), and the two clauses are connected by means of *kai . . . kai dē kai*. Since the cluster *kai dē kai* serves to combine the connective ('and') and the focal ('also', 'even') values of the particle, one should have expected *huperepēinee*. What has happened, I think, is that *to eidos tēs gunaikos* starts as another object with *huperetitheto*, but towards the end of this clause this link has been lost sight of, and the beauty of Candaules' wife becomes the starting point for a new information unit. This unit is presented as an Elaboration of the former, so that a participle, rather than a finite verb, is used: participles that follow the predicate often have this pragmatic function.[16]

It remains to be seen whether the anacoluthon was actually perceived as such by Herodotus' contemporary readers/listeners. As I have argued on a number of occasions ((1992) 96–101, (1997a) 169–70), our sensitivity to syntactic correctness is conditioned by the ways and means of the written language, a language which in Herodotus' time was still in its infancy. A person who writes is able to order his thoughts in all tranquillity and put them together; a person who speaks has to present them in chunks that are comfortable to process, and in doing so has to accept irregularities which maybe he does not even feel are there.

This analysis has yielded various traits that I consider typical of Herodotus' oral style. Two of these will be the object of further study in this contribution: chunking and cohesion strategies—chunking as illustrated in the juxtaposition of seven information units, cohesion as illustrated by the tail/head links.

[16] Stein (1883) 13 compares 8.58.2 Ἐνθαῦτα ὁ Θεμιστοκλέης παριζόμενός οἱ καταλέγει ἐκεῖνά τε πάντα τὰ ἤκουσε Μνησιφίλου, ἑωυτοῦ ποιεύμενος, καὶ ἄλλα πολλὰ προστιθείς, where the pragmatic structure is similar, even though there need not be an anacoluthon (καί may couple the two participles, or it may be a Focus particle modifying ἄλλα πολλά). Cf. also 9.10.1 καὶ . . . τάξεντες.

Predicate Repetition

A chunking device that is virtually restricted to Herodotus (cf. Fehling (1968) 143–4; Slings (1997a) 180) consists in repetition of a verb in what we would consider the middle of a sentence. A well-known example is:

(3) τὸν Σάλμοξιν τοῦτον ἐόντα ἄνθρωπον δουλεῦσαι ἐν Σάμῳ, δουλεῦσαι δὲ Πυθαγόρῃ τῷ Μνησάρχου. (4.95.1)

This Salmoxis was a human being and served as a slave on Samos, a slave of Pythagoras son of Mnesarchus

The verb is repeated because there are too many constituents that contain all-new information, and therefore in principle eligible for Focus function. After the clause Topic *ton Salmoxin touton* and a Setting (Orientation) *eonta anthrōpōn*, which serves to contrast the information given about Salmoxis in this chapter with that given in the previous one (in which Salmoxis is said to be a god), the constituents *douleusai, en Samōi, Puthagorēi tōi Mnēsarkhou* all give 'brand-new' information (cf. Prince (1981)). It stands to reason that not all of these can be placed in the same clause, because it would become too complex for the reader/listener to process. The strategy used here consists of adopting two all-new constituents into the clause, and repeating the verb *douleusai* as the Topic of a new clause (cf. Dik (1995) 210). Thus, two successive, paratactically juxtaposed clauses are used to refer to the same state of affairs, a constellation akin to anaphora, which I shall call non-serial anaphora.[17] As I have shown elsewhere ((1997a) 176–84), chunking is the origin of anaphora in Greek literature in general. In oral language, anaphora is a typical chunking strategy, which speakers can adopt in order to arrange their thoughts as they are formulating them.

The verb-repeating anaphora as illustrated by (3) stands apart from other types of anaphora, in that normally the repeated constituent is the first of two parallel clauses. In (3), however, the strategy is different. What is repeated is the first all-new constituent in a clause that is already a long time on its way, and the clause contains a second all-new constituent besides the first, before it is chunked by

[17] For a discussion of 'normal' anaphora, I refer to Fehling (1969) 187–218; Slings (1997a) 176–84. The three oral strategies to be discussed here are mentioned together as related to each other by Stein (1883) 75.

means of the verb repetition. This means that the first clause has a complex Focus (cf. above, on (2a)). Presumably, Herodotus wished to avoid a triple Focus clause.[18]

In some instances the two Focuses are separated by an X-constituent containing unmarked old information:

(4) πέμψας Καμβύσης ἐς Αἴγυπτον κήρυκα αἴτεε Ἄμασιν θυγατέρα, αἴτεε δὲ ἐκ συμβουλῆς ἀνδρὸς Αἰγυπτίου. (3.1.1)

Cambyses sent a messenger to Egypt and asked Amasis for a daughter of his, which he did at the suggestion of an Egyptian.

I take *pempsas . . . kēruka* as Setting/Orientation, and the clause proper to start with the predicate, which has Focus function. The second Focus *thugatera* is separated from the first by means of *Amasin*, which is given information in this context. Again, the clause cannot contain a third Focus, so chunking has to be applied.[19]

In one case the circumstances are roughly similar in that a focal predicate is repeated because it is followed by two participial clauses, both of which contain all-new information. A third participial clause cannot be accommodated in the sentence without repetition of the predicate:

(5) ἐξεκάλεε, πέμπων κήρυκα, ὀνομαστὶ λέγων τῶν Ἀργείων τοὺς ἐν τῷ ἱρῷ ἀπεργμένους, ἐξεκάλεε δὲ φὰς κτλ. (6.79.1)

He called them out by sending a messenger, calling by name each of the Argives who were shut up in the sanctuary, and did so by saying that . . .

Normally the repeated predicate is connected to the preceding clause by means of *de*. Occasionally, one finds *kai*. If so, the second predicate serves as Topic to a Focus that specifies the manner in which the State of affairs described in the first clause takes place:

[18] Cf. 1.64.2 (predicate καθήρας between two all-new constituents); 1.75.4 (a clause with a Topic/Focus structure of its own depending from the predicate ποιῆσαι); 1.112.2 predicate followed by καὶ ἐγώ (Focus particle); 1.114.1 predicate ἔπαιζε followed by an all-new constituent followed by an identifying relative clause; 2.32.7 (ῥέειν); 2.138.2 predicate the first constituent of the clause (with, I think, Focus function) followed by another focal constituent plus given or inferable unmarked information); 4.139.1 (λύειν); 6.89 (διδοῦσι); 8.76.1 predicate ἀνῆγον followed by Focus plus Orientation participle. Cf. Dik (1995) 207–8; 210–11.

[19] Cf. 3.4.2 μεταδιώκει (Focus) ὁ Ἄμασις (given) σπουδὴν ποιεύμενος ἑλεῖν (second Focus), μεταδιώκει δὲ etc.; 5.100 αἱρέουσι Σάρδις (given) οὐδενός σφι ἀντιωθέντος, αἱρέουσι δέ etc.

(6) ὡς ὦν ἑτοίμου τοῦ γε ἐνθάδε ἐόντος, ποίεε ταῦτα καὶ ποίεε κατὰ τάχος (1.124.3)

Take it that everything here is ready and do as I say, and do it without delay

Here the focal value of the imperative ('you must indeed do this') may be considered too high for the clause to accommodate the all-new *kata takhos* as well. But another factor may play a part. Harpagus has used various arguments to persuade Cyrus to march against Media. The first clause of (6) epitomizes this command. But there had been nothing in the preceding text to argue for it being necessary to march without delay, so if *kata takhos* had been brought in in the same clause as *poiee tauta*, the sentence would lose its rhetorical effectiveness.[20]

In one instance only one all-new constituent is sufficient to trigger this chunking device:

(7) διαβάντες τῇσι νηυσὶ τὸν Ἑλλήσποντον ἐπορεύοντο διὰ τῆς Εὐρώπης, ἐπορεύοντο δὲ ἐπί τε Ἐρέτριαν καὶ Ἀθήνας. (6.43.4)

Having crossed the Hellespont by ship they marched through Europe, and did so against Eretria and Athens.

Here I suspect that the clause is chunked not so much because of the density of information—after all, once you have crossed the Hellespont you will automatically be in Europe, so the Focus of the first main clause (I take *eporeuonto* to be its Topic) is more or less predictable. Rather, I believe chunking is applied to mark the importance of the event told in this sentence, which also contains a regular anaphora (*sunelekhthē men . . . sunelekhthē de*). The event in question is the beginning on European soil of the abortive Persian expedition of 492, the first of the three military struggles between Persia and mainland Greece.

There is an important lesson to be drawn from this instance: chunking devices may be used as literary devices. In Slings (1997a) 175 I formulated the general rule for detecting such phenomena, and formulated it within the framework of reader-response stylistics: 'As a general rule it may be stated that the more complex the information supplied in a clause or sentence is, the higher the chances are for one of these distribution phenomena (i.e., chunking) to occur.

[20] Cf. 4.189.3 κάρτα γὰρ ταύτῃ χρέωνται αἱ Λίβυσσαι καὶ χρέωνται καλῶς.

In reader-response stylistics it follows automatically that the simpler the information supplied in a clause or sentence is, the higher the chances are that the distribution phenomena were experienced as being "literary". Put differently: A figure of speech is a fixed strategy used for arranging information, borrowed from everyday language but employed in such a way that the competent native reader/listener will recognize it as untypical of everyday language and interpret it as literary.'

In Herodotus, extract (7) is not an isolated case. One of the most famous sentences in his work is chunked not because the information load is too dense, but because it is the dramatic climax of a story:

(8) ὡς δὲ κατὰ νώτου ἐγένετο ἰούσης τῆς γυναικὸς ἐς τὴν κοίτην, ὑπεκδὺς ἐχώρεε ἔξω. καὶ ἡ γυνὴ ἐπορᾷ μιν ἐξιόντα. (1.10.2)

When the woman had turned her back and gone to bed, Gyges slipped softly out of the room, but the woman, she saw him leaving.

The position of *min* indicates that after *kai*, there are two information units, not one: *kai hē gunē* and *eporai min exionta* (cf. Slings (1997a) 194–5). Since 'the woman', 'him', and 'leaving' are all given information, only *eporai* is new, so no chunking device is called for. When Herodotus uses one nevertheless, this is one indication (the historic present being another, see Sicking and Stork (1997) 145–6) that a special rhetorical effect is intended, or to put it in reader-response terms, that the reader will interpret the chunking, given the simple information structure of the sentence, as literary.

At the same time, this instance teaches us an important lesson about Herodotus as a stylist. Since the type of chunking illustrated in (7) and (8) is typically a phenomenon of the spoken language, which in general has far more need of chunking than written prose, the use of chunking as a literary device at a dramatic climax shows that he wants his style to be oral. The major part of his sources are oral traditions, and the writer wishes his style to reflect the content. And I do think we should take seriously the reports that Herodotus read his work before an audience, even if oral strategies are *toto caelo* different from strategies that may have been used by 'performers' who proceeded aurally (cf. Slings (1992) 101).[21]

[21] For a different view of Herodotus' reading, see also Rösler, this vol. (Ch. 4); see also Ch. 1 and Ch. 7, this volume.

Chunking of One Constituent

So far we have examined cases in which whole clauses are chunked because they have too many constituents to be processed comfortably. In a fair number of cases, it is not a clause but a single constituent that is subjected to chunking. Sometimes this strategy is used simply to give extra information to a Focus:

(9) τῆς γὰρ Λιβύης τὰ μὲν κατὰ τὴν βορηίην θάλασσαν ἀπ' Αἰγύπτου ἀρξάμενοι μέχρι Σολόεντος ἄκρης, ἣ τελευτᾷ τῆς Λιβύης, παρήκουσι παρὰ πᾶσαν Λίβυες καὶ Λιβύων ἔθνεα πολλά. (2.32.4)

Along the coast line of the northern sea, from Egypt to Cape Soloeis, which is where Libya ends, along the whole of this line live Libyans, many tribes of them.

The clause *parhēkousi para pasan Libues*, in which I would take *parhēkousi* as Topic, *para pasan* as Setting and in which obviously *Libues* is Focus, cannot also accommodate the information that there are many tribes among the Libyans. Therefore the constituent is chunked. In another information unit *Libuōn* is now Topic and *ethnea polla* Focus.

More often, chunking a constituent has the function of narrowing down its referent:

(10) τὰ ἔτι καὶ ἀμφότερα ἐς ἐμὲ ἦν κείμενα ἐν Θήβῃσι, καὶ Θηβέων ἐν τῷ νηῷ τοῦ Ἰσμηνίου Ἀπόλλωνος. (1.52)

Both these things were still lying in Thebes in my day, namely in the temple of Ismenian Apollo.

The strategy is identical to the one used in (9): from a Focus (*en Thēbēisi*) a Topic for a new information unit is derived (likewise put in the genitive) which serves as a foil for the precise location. One may wonder why the two locations are not simply put in apposition: *en Thēbēisi, en tōi nēōi tou Ismēniou Apollōnos*. The information would still be chunked in the same way, but the apposition *en tōi nēōi tou Ismēniou Apollōnos* would have the pragmatic function Tail (for this function, see the discussion above of (1)). I suspect that this is the reason why Herodotus does not use an apposition here: a Tail can contain focal information but does not do so necessarily. By chunking it in the way he does, he achieves maximum focality of the information.[22]

[22] Cf. 1.102.2; 3.136.1; 4.151.2; 9.21.3. 8.17 ἠρίστευσαν Ἀθηναῖοι καὶ Ἀθηναίων

Also to be considered under this head are instances where a constituent is repeated in the same case, as a Theme preceding an information unit about the repeated constituent:

(11) ἀπὸ δὲ Πελοποννήσου Φείδωνος τοῦ Ἀργείων τυράννου παῖς Λεωκήδης, Φείδωνος [δὲ] τοῦ τὰ μέτρα ποιήσαντος Πελοποννησίοισι καὶ ὑβρίσαντος μέγιστα δὴ Ἑλλήνων ἁπάντων, ὃς ἐξαναστήσας τοὺς Ἠλείων ἀγωνοθέτας αὐτὸς τὸν ἐν Ὀλυμπίῃ ἀγῶνα ἔθηκε, τούτου τε δὴ παῖς, καὶ Ἀμίαντος Λυκούργου Ἀρκὰς ἐκ Τραπεζοῦντος. (6.127.3)

From the Peloponnese came Leocedes son of Pheidon the tyrant of Argos, Pheidon who created a system of weights and measures for the Peloponnesians, and who did the deed of greatest arrogance in the whole Greek world, by expelling the Elean *agōnothetai* and organizing the Olympic games himself, a son of this man, and Amiantus son of Lycurgus, an Arcadian from Trapezus.

There is far more the matter here than the common-place use of *de* to connect phrases standing in apposition (cf. Denniston (1954) 163). *Pheidōnos* is repeated from the Focus constituent of which is was only a part (*Pheidōnos tou Argeiōn turannou pais Leōkēdēs*), and given the function of Theme for a number of clauses, two participial ones, and two relative clauses working out the second participial clause.[23] Small wonder that the reader has to be brought back to the original storyline by means of the resumptive information unit *toutou te dê pais*.

Participial Tails

A third chunking strategy consists in repeating the predicate as a participle in a Tail constituent, in order to accommodate further focal information. Normally speaking this new information is a cataphoric element, i.e., a pronominal or adverbial form announcing that new information will be given in the next clause or sentence.

(12) ὁ μὲν δή οἱ ἔλεγε τά περ ὀπώπεε, ὁ δὲ ἐννώσας τὰ λεγόμενα συνεβάλλετο τὸν Ὀρέστην κατὰ τὸ θεοπρόπιον τοῦτον εἶναι, τῇδε συμβαλλόμενος· (1.68.3)

Κλεινίης does not belong here, since Herodotus wants to make two different statements, one about the Greek nation that was the bravest, one about the individual within that nation.

[23] Cf. 7.121.1; 9.73.1.

> This man thus told him what he had seen, and he, having considered his words, concluded that this was Orestes, according to the oracle, concluding this from the following considerations.

The accusative and infinitive clause *ton Orestēn kata to theopropion touton einai* is Focus.[24] Since cataphoric elements are normally Focus themselves, and are strongly focal in any case, *tēide* cannot be accommodated in the *ho de* clause, so a special information unit is created for it by means of a participle that repeats the predicate.

This strategy is not unlike the non-serial anaphora discussed above, (3)–(7). One may therefore wonder why the predicate is not simply repeated, as it is in that strategy. The answer must surely lie in the fact that participial Tails are used for cataphoric elements, and non-serial anaphoras never. Apparently, a cataphoric element is not strong enough to trigger a non-serial anaphora.[25] This in its turn confirms the suspicion I uttered above about the Tail position: it is less suited for full Focus, but it can apparently accommodate a cataphoric element, whose information, after all is only provisional.

In a minority of cases a participial Tail is used in a more complex clause conglomerate:

(13) περιημεκτέων δὲ τῇ συμφορῇ δεινῶς ἐκάλεε μὲν Δία καθάρσιον, μαρτυρόμενος τὰ ὑπὸ τοῦ ξείνου πεπονθὼς εἴη, ἐκάλεε δὲ ἐπίστιόν τε καὶ ἑταιρήιον, τὸν αὐτὸν τοῦτον ὀνομάζων θεόν, τὸν μὲν ἐπίστιον καλέων, διότι δὴ οἰκίοισι ὑποδεξάμενος τὸν ξεῖνον φονέα τοῦ παιδὸς ἐλάνθανε βόσκων, τὸν δὲ ἑταιρήιον, ὡς φύλακον συμπέμψας αὐτὸν εὑρήκοι πολεμιώτατον. (1.44.2)

> Since he was terribly upset about what had happened he called upon Zeus as the god of purification to witness what he had suffered at the hands of his guest-friend, and he called upon him as god of the hearth and god of friendship, thereby addressing the same god. He called upon the god of the hearth because he had taken the foreigner into his house and unwittingly had been feeding his son's killer, and upon the god of friendship because he had sent him as a guard but found him to be his worst enemy.

[24] Since ὁ clearly refers to the Topic, the pragmatic role of συνεβάλλετο is problematic. If it is neither Topic nor Focus, its position as a Predicate should be after the accusative and infinitive clause. Perhaps the very length of this clause has here caused a deviation from the normal rule of word order: Topic—Setting (ἐννώσας)—Predicate—Focus. If this is indeed a rule in Greek word order, it would be identical to the 'fat-things-overboard' principle in Dutch prescriptive linguistics, cf. Slings (1997a) 198. (I am told by my undergraduates that this is originally a strategy used in algebra.)

[25] Cf. 1.67.1; 94.2.

Here the participle *kaleōn* cannot be chunked in any other way, because the sentence already contains the anaphora *ekalee men . . . ekalee de*. If instead of *kaleōn* Herodotus had written *ekalee de* once again, he would not have brought out the hierarchy of the various information units: *kaleōn* and the complements and clauses depending from it explain why Croesus used the epithets of Zeus given in the anaphora.

The constituents *ton men epistion kaleōn* together are Topic of a new clause in which the *dioti* clause is Focus. Similarly, *ton de hetairēion* is Topic and the *hōs* clause Focus.[26]

Chunking of Larger Segments

Chunking is not only a strategy used to help the readers/listeners to process comfortably the contents of a clause complex or sentence, it can also be applied to larger segments. Its function there is basically the same: it helps the reader/listener to keep track of the developments as the story is told. Two major strategies to achieve this are resumptive, sentence-initial *hōs* clauses and resumptive, paratactic *men dē* clauses (for the latter, see Müller (1980) 76–8).

I will illustrate this by means of the following passage,[27] which for the readers' convenience I interrupt with comment on the clauses containing one of these two strategies. All of the five clauses of which the Greek is quoted between brackets contain given and inferable information, sometimes only given information.

(14a) [5.12.1] There were two Paeonians called Pigres and Mastyes, who wanted to rule Paeonia as tyrants. When Darius returned to Asia, Pigres and Mastyes went to Sardis, bringing their sister, who was a tall, beautiful woman. [2] They waited until Darius had established himself just outside the Lydian city, and did the following (τοιόνδε). They dressed their sister in the best clothes they had and sent her to fetch water; as well as carrying a jar on her head, she was leading a horse with the reins around her arm, and was also spinning flax. [3] As the woman passed by (ὡς δὲ παρεξήιε ἡ γυνή), Darius' interest was aroused.

[26] Cf. 6.98.2 (γενόμενα repeats ἐγένετο).
[27] Translation is Waterfield's, with some modifications.

It is not given that the girl passed Darius, but it is of course inferable from the preceding description of her being dressed up and sent off and of her brothers watching Darius that she was meant to do so. Therefore this clause has a low information load. If we examine the clause in its broader context, two things should be noted. First, the story had been slowed down by the description of the girl's preparation (this had been announced by means of *epoiēsan toionde* in 12.2), and it now regains its speed. *Epoiēsan toionde* probably marks this description as an embedded sequence (cf. below on (15b)), so there is a POP at the *hōs* clause. Second, Darius, who is one of the Discourse Topics but has been temporarily lost sight of, is retrieved in the main clause (*epimeles tōi Dareiōi egeneto*), probably as Focus.[28] He will be the main Discourse Topic until the end of 12.3. So this is a point in the story at which there are several changes at the same time, and I would hazard the guess that the *hōs* clause with its low information content helps the reader/listener to 'process comfortably' (cf. Brown and Yule as quoted above, in the discussion of (1)), in this case not the clause but the story.

(14b) Darius' interest was aroused, because (γὰρ) her actions were not typically Persian or Lydian, or indeed Asian in general. As his interest was aroused (ἐπιμελὲς δὲ ὡς οἱ ἐγένετο), he sent some of his personal guards after her.

The second *hōs* clause in 12.3, *epimeles de hōs hoi egeneto*, contains only given information. It serves as a sort of tail/head link, however in this case not with the preceding information unit but with the earlier clause (*epimeles tōi Dareiōi egeneto*), which is on the same level with it: after *epimeles tōi Dareiōi egeneto* there is a PUSH, marked by the particle *gar*, opening an embedded sequence in which the cause of Darius' interest is given. Note that in the embedded sequence Darius, who had just been presented as a renewed Discourse Topic, is again lost sight of. After the POP the *hōs* clause resumes the last clause before the PUSH. This is of course ring composition; we shall see presently that ring composition is a highly necessary strategy in order to help the reader/listener keep track of the main story line.

The left-dislocation of *epimeles* is caused, I presume, by the wish

[28] I would regard ἐπιμελὲς τῷ Δαρείῳ as complex Focus, rather than taking ἐπιμελὲς as single Focus, which would make τῷ Δαρείῳ pragmatically unmarked ('X'), and its position before rather than after the predicate irregular.

to make the tail/head link with the clause before the embedded sequence as clear as possible. This strategy makes the *hōs* clause proper virtually devoid of content.

The point in the story is doubly crucial. Not only is there a POP, and therefore a resumption of the narrative line and a reintroduction of Darius as Discourse Topic, but this is also where Darius first comes into action.

(14c) he sent some of his personal guards after her, with orders to observe what the woman did with the horse. [4] These men followed her (οἱ μὲν δὴ ὄπισθε εἵποντο), and the girl (ἡ δὲ) . . .

It is not given but certainly inferable that the guards obey Darius' orders (it may be the case that the particle *dē* is here used to underline the self-evidentiality of their action—more often it seems to appeal not to the reader/listener's reason but to his knowledge of the story as it has just been told so far).[29]

The last sentence of 12.3 dealt with three different Discourse Topics: Darius, the girl, and a brand-new Discourse Topic, the personal guards. Therefore another low-information clause is in order. Its form is dictated by the multiplicity of actors in the story at this point. Again Darius is shelved, and the remaining two Discourse Topics are contrasted by means of *hoi men . . . hē de.*

(14d) and the girl (ἡ δὲ), when she got to the river, watered the horse, filled the jar with water, and then retraced her steps, carrying the water on her head, using her arm to lead the horse, and constantly using her spindle. [13.1] Darius was impressed with what his men told him they had seen her doing, on top of what he had seen with his own eyes, and he gave orders for her to be brought into his presence. When she had been brought (ὡς δὲ ἄχθη),

Again the *hōs* clause is not entirely given, although the correspondence *agein autēn ekeleue : akhthē* should be noted. It is in any case inferable. In the preceding sentence Darius had again been reactivated, and he had remained sentence Topic throughout. The scene

[29] There is, besides, the following to consider. *μὲν δέ is not a possible particle cluster in Greek (cf. Slings (1997b) 107 n. 17). Therefore alternatives have to be found. It is normally thought that καὶ . . . μὲν and ἀλλά . . . μὲν step into the breach. But with forms of the pronoun ὁ both are extremely rare at the beginning of the sentence in Herodotus. It would seem therefore that ὁ μὲν δή is the 'default value' whenever two Discourse Topics are to be contrasted in two successive clauses.

is now set for the *dénouement*. Note that there is necessarily a lapse of time between the action of the previous sentence and the one of this clause.

(14e) When she had been brought (ὡς δὲ ἄχθη), her brothers (who had been watching the proceedings from somewhere close by) were there as well. Darius asked where she was from, and the young men answered that they were Paeonians, and that she was their sister. [2] Darius asked who the Paeonians might be, and whereabouts they lived, and why they had come to Sardis. They replied that they had come to submit themselves to him, that Paeonia was a settled country on the River Strymon, not far from the Hellespont, and that they were originally Teucrian emigrants from Troy. [3] They told him all these details (οἱ μὲν δὴ ταῦτα ἕκαστα ἔλεγον), and Darius (ὁ δὲ) . . .

Again, two Discourse Topics are contrasted by means of a *men dē . . . de* complex. The *men dē* clause consists entirely of given information (*tauta hekasta* is probably a slightly ironical authorial comment, but a neatly hidden one). The situation is similar to the first *hōs* clause in 12.3, discussed after (14a): the detailed reply had necessarily slowed down the pace of the story, and again Darius has to be retrieved from memory.

(14f) [3] They told him all these details (οἱ μὲν δὴ ταῦτα ἕκαστα ἔλεγον), and Darius (ὁ δὲ) . . . asked them if all the women there were as industrious as their sister. They eagerly replied that they were: all their actions had in fact been designed to lead precisely to this point.

We have seen in the story paraphrased above that at all major turns, resumptive strategies are used in order to assist the reader/listener to process it comfortably. At all major turns, that is, except one: Darius' reaction to the report of the guards who had been following the girl (13.1). Here there is a signal absence of chunking strategies: *thōmazōn de ho Dareios ta te ēkouse ek tōn kataskopōn kai ta autos hōra, agein autēn ekeleue heautōi es opsin*. Here it is the sudden reappearance of Darius as Discourse and sentence Topic that creates, as it were, a new paragraph. There is some resumption, but it is to be found in the two relative clauses *ta te ēkouse ek tōn kataskopōn kai ta autos hōra*. In the first, we are told by implication that the guards who had been following the girl came back to report, and in the second we are brought back to 12.2. The participle *thōmazōn* points backwards to *epimeles tōi Dareiōi egeneto*, and to its repetition *epimeles de hōs hoi*

egeneto, but only partly so, since he was not only impressed (*thōmazōn*) by what he had seen but also by the guards' report. This, then, looks much more like a written strategy than an oral one, and it is certainly no coincidence that oral strategies are absent at the most important point in the story.

Ring Composition

The whole story is itself presented as an embedded sequence. I will now quote the surrounding segments:

(15a) Δαρεῖον δὲ συνήνεικε πρῆγμα τοιόνδε ἰδόμενον ἐπιθυμῆσαι ἐντείλασθαι Μεγαβάζῳ Παίονας ἑλόντα ἀνασπάστους ποιῆσαι ἐκ τῆς Εὐρώπης ἐς τὴν Ἀσίην. (5.12.1)

It so happened that Darius saw the following, which made him wish to order Megabazus to round up the Paeonians and deport them from Europe to Asia.

(15b) Ἐνθαῦτα Δαρεῖος γράφει γράμματα Μεγαβάζῳ, τὸν ἔλιπε ἐν τῇ Θρηίκῃ στρατηγόν, ἐντελλόμενος ἐξαναστῆσαι ἐξ ἠθέων Παίονας καὶ παρ' ἑωυτὸν ἀγαγεῖν καὶ αὐτοὺς καὶ τὰ τέκνα τε καὶ τὰς γυναῖκας αὐτῶν. (5.14.1)

Then Darius wrote a letter to Megabazus, the military commander he had left in Thrace, ordering him to uproot the Paeonians from their native land and bring them to him, together with their children and women.

Note the verbal correspondences: apart from the names of Darius, Megabazus and the Paeonians, the two forms of *entellomai; anaspastous poiēsai* in (15a) is varied by *exanastēsai ex ētheōn* in (15b). In (15a), the story to be told is referred to by means of *prēgma toionde.* This strongly suggests that the story itself is an embedded sequence, with a PUSH at the beginning of (14a), where the presentative sentence *ēn Pigrēs kai Mastuēs andres Paiones* should be noted, and a POP at the beginning of (15b). It is perhaps the case that this POP is marked by the adverb *enthauta*, which when placed at the beginning of a sentence often marks an important new stage in a story (Müller (1980) 38).

Ring composition in Herodotus has often been studied,[30] so a

[30] See especially Immerwahr (1966) 54–8; Beck (1971); and for an analysis of the use of tenses in ring composition, Rijksbaron (1988). See also Boedeker, this volume (Ch. 5, note 22, p. 104) as well as de Jong (Ch. 11), pp. 260–1.

detailed treatment is superfluous here. But two general points about it should be stressed. The first is its importance in the hierarchical structuring of the text. I borrow the following example and its treatment from Slings (1997b) 103–4:

(16) (*a*) ἐσέβαλε μέν νυν στρατιὴν καὶ οὗτος, ἐπείτε ἦρξε, ἔς τε Μίλητον καὶ ἐς Σμύρνην, καὶ Κολοφῶνος τὸ ἄστυ εἶλε. (*b*) ἀλλ' οὐδὲν (*c*) γὰρ μέγα ἀπ' αὐτοῦ ἄλλο ἔργον ἐγένετο βασιλεύσαντος δυῶν δέοντα τεσσεράκοντα ἔτεα, (*b'*) τοῦτον μὲν παρήσομεν τοσαῦτα ἐπιμνησθέντες, Ἄρδυος δὲ τοῦ Γύγεω μετὰ Γύγην βασιλεύσαντος μνήμην ποιήσομαι. (*d*) Οὗτος δὲ Πριηνέας τε εἶλε ἐς Μίλητόν τε ἐσέβαλε. (1.14.4–15.1)

(*a*) Once Gyges was king, he sent a military expedition against Miletus and Smyrna and captured Colophon. (*b*) However, (*c*) since he achieved nothing else of significance during the thirty-eight years of his kingship, (*b'*) we will say no more about him beyond what I have already said, and I'll mention his son Ardys who succeeded him. (*d*) Ardys captured Priene and attacked Miletus.

The embedding sequence consists of (16*a*) and (16*d*)—note the similarity in verbs and tenses (*esebale, heile*) in both of these clauses. The embedded sequence (16*bcb'*) is set off from it by a change in tense (the futures in (16*b'*)) and in person (first singular and first plural). The first person plural also points to an interactionality between author and reader: in a conversation one might say 'Well, we'll skip him, won't we?'. The point of the embedded sequence is, of course, to replace one Discourse Topic (Gyges) with another (Ardys). There is a deictic shift after the POP: *touton* in (16*b'*) refers to Gyges, *houtos* in (16*d*) to Ardys. And finally the PUSH replaces a narrative with auctorial comment, at the POP the narrative is resumed.

The function of the ring composition is here manifest: it sets off hierarchically lower material, in which the author explains why he is substituting one Discourse Topic for another, from the main line of the story. In (15a) and (15b) ring composition has a similar aim: it marks the story about the Paeonian girl and her brothers as hierarchically subordinate to Darius' order to Megabazus to transport the Paeonians from Europe to Asia.[31]

[31] The thematic importance of the Paeonians for Herodotus' work as a whole can hardly be overestimated. We first hear about them (apart from a mention in passing in a geographical passage, 4.49.1) in an excursus in 5.1, when the first Greek city on the European continent, Perinthus, has been conquered by the Persians. The story of their transportation from Europe to Asia, already thematic

The second point to be made about ring composition is that it is not a typical propensity of the archaic mind—whatever value might be attached to such an abstract concept,[32] but a very common phenomenon in spoken discourse, more in particular in situations where a speaker is given the floor for a longer stretch of discourse. Clusters of information units need to be organized in such a way that their position within the entire discourse is easy to understand for the addressee. Ring composition helps speakers to do just that. A completed ring functions as a signpost, helping the addressee to keep track of the line of thought. But ring composition is not just a help: it is a highly necessary ingredient of speech. Precisely because speech consists of juxtaposed information units, there must be a clearly recognizable principle of organizing blocks of information units.

Keeping Track of Discourse Topics

Another feature of Herodotus' style, related to repetition as it chunks and surrounds segments, is repetition within segments used to assist the reader/listener in identifying Discourse Topics once they have been introduced. The following passage, again an embedded sequence (plus a tail/head link that functions as a POP to the main line of the narrative) illustrates this. Darius returns to Persia, having appointed Otanes commander of the coastal regions of Asia Minor.

(17) τοῦ τὸν πατέρα Σισάμνην βασιλεὺς Καμβύσης γενόμενον τῶν βασιληίων δικαστέων, ὅτι ἐπὶ χρήμασι δίκην ἄδικον ἐδίκασε, σφάξας ἀπέδειρε πᾶσαν τὴν ἀνθρωπηίην, σπαδίξας δὲ αὐτοῦ τὸ δέρμα ἱμάντας ἐξ αὐτοῦ ἔταμε καὶ ἐνέτεινε τὸν θρόνον ἐς τὸν ἵζων ἐδίκαζε· ἐντανύσας δὲ ὁ Καμβύσης ἀπέδεξε δικαστὴν εἶναι ἀντὶ τοῦ Σισάμνεω, τὸν ἀποκτείνας ἀπέδειρε, τὸν παῖδα τοῦ Σισάμνεω, ἐντειλάμενός οἱ μεμνῆσθαι ἐν τῷ κατίζων θρόνῳ δικάζει. Οὗτος ὦν ὁ Ὀτάνης, ὁ ἐγκατιζόμενος ἐς τοῦτον τὸν θρόνον, τότε διάδοχος γενόμενος Μεγαβάζῳ τῆς στρατηγίης Βυζαντίους τε εἶλε κτλ. (5.25.1–26)

in itself, comes right after Histiaeus has been given Myrcinus (5.11.2), which will eventually lead to the Ionian revolt and thus to the great conflict between Persians and Greeks; it reads as a foreshadowing of the fate of the Eretrians after the same Ionian revolt (6.119.4). And the Paeonians return to their original area directly after the arrival of the Athenian ships, which ἀρχὴ κακῶν ἐγένοντο (5.97.3, with a clear allusion to *Il.* 5.63).

[32] Cf. Slings (2000) 10–15 and 25 for a more fundamental critique of this term.

> whose father Sisamnes, who had been one of the royal judges, Cambyses, because he had taken a bribe to deliver an unfair verdict, had slit his throat and flayed off all his skin; having flayed off his skin he had thongs made out of it and he strung with them the chair on which he had used to go and sit to deliver his verdict; having strung it Cambyses appointed to be a judge instead of Sisamnes, whom he had flayed after having killed him, Sisamnes' son, telling him to remember on what chair he would go and sit to deliver his verdict. This Otanes, the man who used to go and sit on that chair, then having become the successor of Megabazus' command took Byzantium and etc.

Syntactically speaking, the embedded sequence consists of one long digressive relative clause, which has definitely reached its end at *houtos ōn ho Otanēs*. This shows that the whole sequence is intended to introduce Otanes further to the reader/listener. The relative clause is chunked twice by means of participial tail/head link: *spadixas de* (note the careful variation in the choice of words here; not only *apedeire: spadixas*, but also *pasan tēn anthrōpeēn: to derma*) and *entanusas de*.[33]

At the start of this passage, there are three main Discourse Topics: Darius, Megabazus (Otanes' predecessor as commander of the coastal regions), and Otanes, who had just been introduced as a New Topic. In the embedded sequence, three more Discourse Topics are referred to: Otanes' father Sisamnes, the judicial chair, and the previous Persian king Cambyses. Let us examine how each of the three, as well as the relatively new Discourse Topic Otanes, are presented.

Sisamnes is first identified as the father of Otanes (*tou ton patera Sisamnēn*), next by means of the accusative followed by the nominative (*ton patera Sisamnēn basileus Kambusēs*) as target of some as yet unspecified action of Cambyses, and then as a former royal judge. After this information we hear the action Cambyses took against Sisamnes in great detail. After the story is over Sisamnes is referred to with his full name plus a digressive relative clause (*anti tou Sisamneō, ton apokteinas edeire*), and again his full name is given when Otanes is reactivated as Discourse Topic (*ton patera tou Sisamneō*).

[33] One may well wonder if this was felt by Herodotus' readers/listeners to be still a subordinate clause until the very end, but it seems quite arbitrary to me to print a high point before ἐντανύσας δὲ, as most editors do. It is in the nature of spoken language that there is a grey area between main clause and subordinate clause (cf. Slings (1994) 414–20; (2000) 23–4), and it won't do to force this clause (or clause complex, rather) onto the Procrustean bed of the syntax of the written language.

The throne is first mentioned as a more or less inferable entity (*ton thronon es ton hizōn edikaze*) when Cambyses reupholsters it; since Sisamnes is expressly introduced as a judge, this presupposes a special throne.[34] Next, it is mentioned by Cambyses in the advice he gives Otanes (*enteilamenos hoi memnēsthai, en tōi kathizōn thronōi dikazei*). And finally, after the POP at *houtos ōn ho Otanēs*, it serves to secure the identification of Otanes (*ho enkathizomenos es touton ton thronon*).[35]

By contrast, Cambyses is simply referred to as *basileus Kambusēs*. Although he is clause Topic for most of the embedded sequence, there is no Topic expression, except once as *ho Kambusēs* (after a relative clause which first identifies the throne). He has long remained inactive as a Discourse Topic (he had been mentioned more or less in passing at 4.165.3 and 4.166.1), but since he had played such an important part in Herodotus' history, very little is needed to reactivate him.

As for Otanes, I have already noted that the whole embedded sequence is in fact meant to introduce him. He is first mentioned simply by his name, which is the antecedent of the relative clause in which the embedded sequence consists—by implication, the embedded sequence identifies him as son of Sisamnes. Within the embedded sequence, he is indeed presented as such (*ton paida ton Sisamneō*) and he remains an active Discourse Topic after that (*hoi*; unexpressed subject of *dikazei*). After the POP, he is formally identified as clause Topic by means of *houtos ōn ho Otanēs* (cf. the introduction of Candaules at (2a)), and the story told in the embedded sequence is resumed in order that there can be no mistake whatsoever about his identity (*ho enkathizomenos es touton ton thronon*).

This is in fact a double tail/head link: *houtos ōn ho Otanēs* connects the sequence after the POP with the embedded sequence, because as we saw Otanes had already been an active Discourse Topic before it. The participial phrase about him (atypical in that it is a substantivated, not a circumstantial participle that is used in a tail/head link) resumes the second half of the embedded sequence.

There is, to the modern reader, a certain fullness of references here. For example, instead of *anti tou Sisamneō, ton apokteinas edeire, ton*

[34] Compare τὸν θρόνον ἐς τὸν ἴζων ἐδίκαζε with 1.14.3 τὸν βασιλήιον θρόνον ἐς τὸν προκατίζων ἐδίκαζε.

[35] Müller (1980) 51–5 stresses Herodotus' use of anaphoric pronouns in securing maximum cohesion.

paida tou Sisamneō, we would have understood the story equally well had Herodotus simply written *ant' autou ton paida*. And we would not have missed anything (except a highly pleasant aesthetic experience) if the substantivated participial phrase *ho enkathizomenos es touton ton thronon* had been omitted.

But this is typically a reader's reaction. Herodotus' style is such that he wishes to be readily understood by listeners as well as by readers. And for listeners, repetitiveness is a crucial condition for understanding a story about a brand-new Discourse Topic, and a story with so many other Discourse Topics as well.

Here again, Herodotus sometimes uses this typically oral strategy when the conditions that make it necessary do not apply, probably in order to heighten the dramatic effect. A particularly noteworthy case is:

(17) Ἄδρηστος δὲ ὁ Γορδίεω τοῦ Μίδεω, οὗτος δὴ ὁ φονεὺς μὲν τοῦ ἑωυτοῦ ἀδελφεοῦ γενόμενος, φονεὺς δὲ τοῦ καθήραντος, ἐπείτε ἡσυχίη τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐγένετο περὶ τὸ σῆμα, συγγινωσκόμενος ἀνθρώπων εἶναι τῶν αὐτὸς ἤδεε βαρυσυμφορώτατος, ἐπικατασφάζει τῷ τύμβῳ ἑωυτόν. (1.45.3)

But Adrastus son of Gordias the son of Midas, he who was the killer of his own brother and the killer of his purifier, when it was quiet around the tomb, realizing that he was the most wretched man among those he knew, slaughtered himself at the tomb.

Adrastus has been an activated Discourse Topic all along; he had not been mentioned in the very short clause which precedes this sentence, in which the tomb is introduced as a Discourse Topic. So there was really no need for him to be identified in such a heavy way. The reader/listeners know the name of his father and his grandfather, they know that he had killed his brother and Croesus' son (*phoneus de tou kathērantos* is metaphorical, because Croesus himself, not his son, had been Adrastus' purifier, but that repeats Adrastus' own words *hōs . . . ton kathēranta apolōlekōs eiē* at 45.1). Consequently, a strategy devised to keep track of Discourse Topics is used not in order to help the reader/listener identify a particular Discourse Topic, but for the sake of dramatic effect.

It will be clear from the above that Herodotus uses many oral strategies, and he does so in a natural way because he has an audience of listeners in mind. Yet he also uses oral strategies where they are

not required by the needs of the audience, in order to highlight important events in his story. That is to say, although his is basically an oral style, he can use oral strategies as rhetorical devices when it suits him. These devices reinforce the oral character of his language, and show that the choice of an oral style was a natural one for Herodotus to make, because it suited his subject matter. To contrast Herodotus and Thucydides as typical representatives of the oral vs. the written style is not unuseful, but it misses an important point to the extent that for either historian, content dictated form.

Let me finish by stating a thesis. It is useless, when dealing with classical Greek authors, to point out a figure of speech and leave it at that (cf. Slings (1997a)). The habit can become positively harmful when such a figure is invested with all sorts of meanings, although the harm is often diminished when on closer inspection such meanings turn out to be utterly vague ones like 'emphasis'. The only useful way of studying style is audience-oriented, linguistic and more in particular pragmatic. We should start from the native reader,[36] who is Chomsky's native speaker, whose feeling for style is conditioned by having read or listened to a great amount of the literature of his own culture. We cannot be native speakers of Greek, but it is our duty as interpreters of Greek texts to come as close to them as possible by observing what goes on in natural language use in living languages. Only in this way can we hope to achieve anything fruitful at all.

[36] Cf. Fish (1980); Austin (1984).

CHAPTER FOUR

THE *HISTORIES* AND WRITING

Wolfgang Rösler

Herodotus, Thucydides and the New Era of Greek Literacy

Thucydides is rightly regarded as an outstanding representative of the cultural change which took place from the second half of the fifth century onwards. The Greeks had had an alphabetical script for more than three centuries, but only now had written texts become so plentiful and ubiquitous that one may speak of a new era.[1] Perceptive men could not help making two related observations. It was obvious that the significance of books and writing was increasing and would continue to do so (just as is the case with the use of computers in our days). At the same time, looking back they saw that writing could preserve a *logos* for a long time. It was not only great works of poetry, from Homer onwards, which had been preserved in this way, but also prose such as the book of Heraclitus.[2] Once these two observations had been made, they inevitably led to a new, 'modern' idea of the production of written texts.

This new concept is realized and exemplified with especial consistency and clarity in the historical writing of Thucydides. His work is no longer addressed to an audience listening to a recitation, it is directed towards a future reader. That is why Thucydides can describe it as 'a possession for ever' (κτῆμα ἐς αἰεί: 1.22). This entails a crucial consequence: its length is no longer dictated by the traditional constraints of a *logos*. Previously it was an implicit rule that a written

[1] The outlines of this development (with particular regard to Athens) were sketched in by Turner (1952). Since then numerous investigations have substantiated and also refined his account. Thucydides' role in this development had already been clearly established by Harder (1943) 107.

[2] The sophist Hippias (86 B 6 D-K) was able to read a mass of preserved written texts, and compile from them what he himself called a 'work new in kind and various' (τοῦτον καινὸν καὶ πολυειδῆ τὸν λόγον), in which he assembled from works of poetry and prose 'the most important and akin matters' (τὰ μέγιστα καὶ ὁμόφυλα). Cf. Snell (1944); Patzer (1986).

prose text, a *syngraphē*, was geared to the length of an oral *logos*. Thucydides' history throws off this restriction in a radical manner. Although it remained unfinished, it is possible to make a rough estimate of what its length would have been, had Thucydides lived to finish it. It would have been somewhat longer than the only other work from the fifth century which is comparable with Thucydides in this respect: the *Histories* of Herodotus.[3]

The chronological relationship of these two works is more complicated than the simple difference of age between the two writers—more than twenty years—would lead one to surmise. When Thucydides conceived the idea for his work and began preparing it, Herodotus' work did not yet exist. For, as Thucydides tells us in his first sentence, he began his account right at the beginning of the Peloponnesian War. At that time Herodotus was still busy writing down his own work. This is shown by references to the first two years of the war in Books Six, Seven and Nine.[4] The summer of 431 is the *terminus post quem* for at least a good third of the *Histories* (6.91 to the end of the work), and we should not imagine a considerable interval of time between the composition of this and the preceding parts of the work (as I shall be arguing below). It is thus plausible that both writers—not only Thucydides, but also Herodotus—had, on the basis of identical observations, almost simultaneously reached the conclusion that the time was ripe to create an entirely new type of text. It was not only Thucydides who was destined to have such an innovative idea. Herodotus too shows himself fully aware of the historic change in the conditions of communication, when he gives an account of the Greeks' adoption of the Phoenician alphabet which is basically correct (5.58). In any case, these considerations led both writers to create a text of a length regulated by content, and nothing but content, a text intended from the outset to reach readers beyond their own time and age.[5]

[3] It is true that the lost mythographical work of Pherecydes of Athens (approximately contemporary with Herodotus) is reported to have contained 10 books (*FGrHist* 3). From the mere number of books, however, one can only roughly estimate the size of a work, as can be seen from the fact that Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*, although containing 8 books, like Thucydides' work, is only half as long as the latter. Already Hecataeus' *Genealogiae* were relatively long, consisting of 4 books (*FGrHist* 1 F 1–35).

[4] 6.91 (summer 431); 7.137 (late summer 430, the latest date mentioned) 7.233; 9.73. Cf. Jacoby (1913) 230 f.

[5] For other points of contact between Herodotus and Thucydides, see ch. 7 in this volume.

An Old Man Takes to Writing

Thucydides expected (1.1) that the Peloponnesian War would be 'great, and therefore more worthy of record than all previous wars' (ἐλπίσας μέγαν τε ἔσεσθαι καὶ ἀξιολογώτατον τῶν προγεγενημένων); hence he began taking notes as soon as the war broke out. Less clear is the connection between the (imminent) outbreak of war and Herodotus' decision to commit his history to writing.

At this time Herodotus was already in his mid-fifties, in other words he composed his *Histories* relatively late in life. It is reasonable to assume that he had previously been active as a *logographos*.[6] What this meant is explained by Thucydides when he contrasts his own historiography with texts intended for oral delivery, such as *logographoi* compose (1.21 f.). According to Thucydides, oral delivery has significant consequences: such texts are angled 'not so much towards telling the truth as towards pleasing the audience' (ἐπὶ τὸ προσαγωγότερον τῇ ἀκροάσει ἢ ἀληθέστερον), they are targeted at 'the immediate effect on the audience' (ἐς τὸ παραχρῆμα ἀκούειν).[7] But this period of life now lay behind Herodotus. For some time he had been a citizen of the colony of Thurii in Magna Graecia; here, at a certain physical distance from events in the mother country, the expectation that the impending war would be very great, similar to that expressed by Thucydides, might have led him to the conclusion that lecture tours would be difficult, if not impossible, in wartime conditions.

In Herodotus' case this conclusion must have led to yet another, more fundamental reflection, one which was connected with his own passing years. As an 'oral historian', Herodotus had accumulated an exceptionally extensive knowledge, one which he alone possessed. He drew on this knowledge for his lectures. He had built it up by means of his own *historiē* (inquiry), i.e., by autopsy and interviews, largely during his numerous travels, often under difficult circumstances.[8] But

[6] It cannot be denied that there is no strict evidence for this (Erbse (1979) 139 ff., following others; Johnson (1994) 240 ff.). Jacoby admitted, (1913) 242: 'Eigentliche 'Zeugnisse' haben wir natürlich nicht und können sie nicht haben', yet added that lecture tours were typical of that period. This is confirmed by Thucydides himself, when he distances himself from the *logographoi* (see below); we may also, in a wider context, point to the lecturing activities of the sophists.

[7] The ephemeral character of logographic texts is highlighted by the antithesis παραχρῆμα—(κτῆμα ἐς) αἰεί.

[8] For *historiē*, see Ch. 1 in this volume.

most of this knowledge was stored only in his memory,[9] and even manuscripts which he had written as *logographos* ἐς τὸ παραχρῆμα ἀκούειν did not have an existence independent of their author. At the same time as Thucydides was considering writing a history of the Peloponnesian War, Herodotus must have decided to provide his body of knowledge with a life independent of his own existence, so that it would no longer rely on being disseminated by Herodotus the 'oral historian'. It was clear that this would create a work of considerable extent, such as there had never been before. But now this seemed possible. The development from orality to literacy had reached the point at which such a work could appear. At this juncture Herodotus becomes not only the *pater historiae* but at the same time it is he, the former *logographos*, and not Thucydides, who gives birth to an entirely new medium: the massive text written for readers in the future.[10]

Writing the Histories: Arrangement and Procedure

Herodotus' decision to put his stock of knowledge into written form for posterity posed a fundamental question: how should this knowledge be 'organized' in the text? Oral lectures such as Herodotus had been used to giving must always have dealt with a more limited subject matter. Now he was embarking upon a completely new enterprise. Herodotus solved the problem by establishing a main theme, the conflict between the Greeks and the barbarians, from the beginnings until the final repulsion of the Persian invasion in 479. This was the main road along which he could progress. His knowledge,

[9] It might be an anachronism to picture Herodotus using written notes. He could rely on his memory—as can be seen from his account of the pyramid of Cheops (2.125): there is an inscription, he says, recording in Egyptian characters how much has been spent on radishes, onions, and garlic for (as is apparently the meaning) the health of the workers; 'and, as I well remember, the interpreter who read out the hieroglyphics told me that 1,600 silver talents had been spent' (καὶ ὡς ἐμὲ εὖ μεμνῆσθαι τὰ ὁ ἑρμηνεύς μοι ἐπιλεγόμενος τὰ γράμματα ἔφη, ἑξακόσια καὶ χίλια τάλαντα ἀργυρίου τετελέσθαι).

[10] The view which I suggest here, which connects the development of Greek literacy in the second half of the fifth century with the scale of the *Histories* and Herodotus' personal situation at the beginning of the Peloponnesian War, has gradually taken shape over the course of two decades. It is presented here in a condensed form.—As for the readers for whom Herodotus and Thucydides were writing, we should not necessarily imagine them as reading aloud (cf. Gavrilov (1997)).

however, extended further than this single huge subject. Ancient critics already pointed to the *poikilia* of the *Histories*,[11] and modern critics have viewed the combination of historical narrative with countless digressions and additions, varying in length and subject matter, as the product of an uncontrolled appetite for story telling.[12]

However, this structure can be shown to be precisely calculated. Herodotus makes this clear at one point in the *Histories* where one digression branches off into several more (4.28–30). He is writing about the coldness of Scythia, then about its effect on horses, mules, and donkeys, as well as upon the growth of horns on cattle, which brings him to the question why mules do not thrive in Elis despite its pleasant climate. At this point Herodotus realizes that he owes his readers an explanation, and he adds in lapidary fashion: προσθήκας γὰρ δή μοι ὁ λόγος ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἐδίζητο ('from the beginning my *logos* sought digressions': 4.30.1). The reason behind this digressional structure becomes obvious if one considers the date and the goals of Herodotus' composition. If it was indeed his advancing age that urged him to give his knowledge an existence independent of his own, then omitting any piece of it meant consigning it to oblivion. This is why again and again Herodotus turns from the main road, the story of the conflict between Greeks and barbarians. In this way he incorporates the mass of additional material which he possessed. What from merely formal analysis appears as a 'lack of discipline' is on the contrary a precisely calculated, highly disciplined plan.

It is, however, less easy to reconstruct the concrete process of putting the material into written form. The following hypothesis was suggested by Jacoby in his epoch-making article 'Herodotos' in the *Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, an entry of book length which laid the foundations for twentieth-century Herodotean scholarship.[13] He regards the composition of the *Histories* mainly as a work of editing rather than actual writing. To his mind much of it is collage, a 'scissors and paste' job ('Arbeit mit der Schere'). Herodotus, says Jacoby, tried 'to utilize everything which he had previously presented in lectures' ('alles zu verwenden . . ., was er bisher in Vorträgen . . . geboten hatte') and 'as far as possible to re-use his

[11] References in Riemann (1967) 73 ff.
[12] See Ch. 11 in this volume.
[13] Jacoby (1913). The quotations which follow are from coll. 361 and 366.

stock of lectures in their existing form' ('den Bestand an Vorträgen möglichst in der vorhandenen Form zu verwerten').

There is more than one reason to doubt this scenario. Admittedly, there is an ancient parallel for the assumed procedure, in Plato's *Phaedrus*, when Socrates caricatures the *syngrapheus* as someone (278d) who over a long time turns the text over and over, sticks bits together and separates them again (ἄνω κάτω στρέφων ἐν χρόνῳ, πρὸς ἄλληλα κολλῶν τε καὶ ἀφαιρῶν).[14] Herodotus, however, was definitely not like this caricature; as an oral historian he would hardly have given readings exclusively from manuscripts.[15] A closer parallel can probably be found in the Platonic Hippias' account of his appearance at Olympia (*Hipp. min.* 363 c–d):

> . . . εἰ Ὀλυμπίαζε μὲν εἰς τὴν τῶν Ἑλλήνων πανήγυριν, ὅταν τὰ Ὀλύμπια ᾖ, ἀεὶ ἐπανιὼν οἴκοθεν ἐξ Ἤλιδος εἰς τὸ ἱερὸν παρέχω ἐμαυτὸν καὶ λέγοντα ὅτι ἄν τις βούληται ὧν ἄν μοι εἰς ἐπίδειξιν παρεσκευασμένον ᾖ, καὶ ἀποκρινόμενον τῷ βουλομένῳ ὅτι ἄν τις ἐρωτᾷ . . .
>
> . . . when I go to Olympia for the festive assembly of the Greeks, whenever the Olympic Games take place, going from my homeland Elis to the sanctuary, and I make an appearance there and give a talk as requested by one, from those that I have prepared for the show, or answer a question put by another . . .

If one deviates from Jacoby's hypothesis and postulates that the entire *Histories* were actually put into writing in Thurii, this would fit in with Lattimore's observations concerning Herodotus' 'progressive style'.[16] He points out that errors and incomplete references which Herodotus notices as he works on his text are corrected or completed at the very point which he just happens to have reached. In other words, they remain in the text, the text is not reworked 'over a long time'. This—along with the (quite rare) instances of unfulfilled announcements[17]—indicates a process of continuous writing pressing towards a conclusion. And it is the stylistic unity of the very work

[14] Cf. Heitsch (1991).

[15] This consideration aside, the general arguments put forward by Dorandi (1991) would yet give us cause to remain sceptical about the postulation of such a procedure.

[16] Lattimore (1958). Lattimore seems, however, to be inconsistent in assuming (p. 19) the composition to have taken an extremely long time (about twenty years).

[17] 1.106 and 184 (for the recent debate about the announcement of further *Assyrioi logoi*, see Nesselrath (1999) 201 f. and note 25 in ch. 1, note 40 in ch. 17 of this volume); 7.213.

that confirms this explanation. Eduard Meyer aptly described this impression, when he called the *Histories* a work 'aus einem Guss'.[18]

The Histories and Herodotus the Oral Historian

Modern critics often pay too little attention to the fact that we cannot get to know Herodotus the oral historian from the *Histories*, except in an indirect way.[19] This text contains only traces which can with due caution be used to reconstruct the oral Herodotus.[20] Yet the *Histories* did not themselves provide the text for Herodotus' public appearances. On the contrary, their composition should be seen as a late break with his past as an oral teller of tales. The recitation of the entire work has been calculated to have required at least fifty hours;[21] this makes such a recitation impossible. Equally improbable is the explanation that the *Histories* were a store of separate narratives for use in oral recitations. We have already spoken of the material being organized along a main 'road', i.e., the conflict between Greeks and barbarians. In what follows we will show more precisely that this arrangement only makes sense if we presuppose that the author intended the work to be received as a whole, as the result of an individual act of reading.[22]

At the beginning of the *Histories* the *aitiê* of the enmity between

[18] Meyer (1901) 244 (= (1944) 227 n. 1). Meyer said the essential in the following two sentences: 'Von Kirchhoffs Untersuchungen . . . bleibt als einziges Ergebniss, dass die Geschichte der Perserkriege während der ersten Jahre des archidamischen Krieges geschrieben ist. Dies Ergebniss gilt aber für das ganze Werk, da dasselbe nach einer einheitlichen, sorgfältig entworfenen Disposition gearbeitet und durchaus aus einem Guss ist.'

[19] Even plainer is Johnson's statement, (1994) 230: 'Did Herodotus write his history with oral performance in mind? Such has been the almost universal assumption.'

[20] An attempt at this has recently been made by Dorati (2000). For the 'orality' of the *Histories*, see Chs. 1 and 3 in this volume.

[21] Flory (1980) 14; Cf. Johnson (1994) 250 f.

[22] An early voice (Schöll (1855) 419): 'Nach allem was seit *Creuzers* "historischer kunst der Griechen" für die einsicht geschehen ist, wie sinnreich der mannichfaltige inhalt sämmtlicher 9 bücher des Herodot in seinen theilen zusammengeschlungen und zur einheit verbunden ist, wird auch klar, dass in dieser ausarbeitung der schriftsteller auf ruhig und anhaltend folgende *leser* gerechnet hat.' Today it is still necessary to present virtually the same argument (Johnson (1994) 251): 'The elaborately constructed attempt at unity implies that the author intended the work to be presented as a whole. Yet the size of the work seems to preclude oral performance as a suitable means for such a presentation.'

Greeks and barbarians is considered on two levels. Right away the Proem raises the question 'for what reason they fought each other' (δι' ἣν αἰτίην ἐπολέμησαν ἀλλήλοισι). On a first level Herodotus recounts a Persian interpretation of four Greek myths (with a Phoenician appendix), which is designed to show that the Greeks bear the responsibility.[23] He declines to take sides himself (1.5):

> Ἐγὼ δὲ περὶ μὲν τούτων οὐκ ἔρχομαι ἐρέων ὡς οὕτως ἢ ἄλλως κως ταῦτα ἐγένετο· τὸν δὲ οἶδα αὐτὸς πρῶτον ὑπάρξαντα ἀδίκων ἔργων ἐς τοὺς Ἕλληνας, τοῦτον σημήνας προβήσομαι ἐς τὸ πρόσω τοῦ λόγου . . .
>
> Concerning these things I will not say that it happened like this or differently; but the man whom I myself know to have first started unjust acts against the Greeks, him shall I point out and then push on with my *logos* . . .

This takes Herodotus to a second level, where he is able to answer the question of the *aitiē* on the basis of his own knowledge. For our purpose it is important to note the redundant formula used to introduce the man who *first started* unjust acts (Croesus). Further emphasis is given by a matching sentence in the next chapter (1.6):

> Οὗτος ὁ Κροῖσος βαρβάρων πρῶτος τῶν ἡμεῖς ἴδμεν τοὺς μὲν κατεστρέψατο Ἑλλήνων ἐς φόρου ἀπαγωγήν, τοὺς δὲ φίλους προσεποιήσατο. Κατεστρέψατο μὲν Ἰωνάς τε καὶ Αἰολέας καὶ Δωριέας τοὺς ἐν τῇ Ἀσίῃ, φίλους δὲ προσεποιήσατο Λακεδαιμονίους.
>
> This Croesus was the first of the barbarians of which we have knowledge, to subject one part of the Greeks to pay tribute; the other part he made his friends. He subjected the Ionians, the Aeolians, and the Dorians of Asia Minor, and made the Lacedaemonians his friends.

The strong emphasis on this 'being the first' is a clear indication that the conflict will be followed up beyond Croesus.[24] This thread is then explicitly taken up again after the description of the conquest of Ionia by Cyrus' troops (1.169): Οὕτω δὴ τὸ δεύτερον Ἰωνίη ἐδεδούλωτο ('Thus Ionia had been enslaved for the second time'). The transition from Cyrus to Cambyses at the beginning of Book Two pro-

[23] I am currently preparing a study on this section: 'Der Frauenraub-Mythos der persischen Logioi bei Herodot'.

[24] The famous announcement following the first of these passages (1.5), too, concerns the entire work: Τὴν ἀνθρωπηίην ὦν ἐπιστάμενος εὐδαιμονίην οὐδαμὰ ἐν ὠυτῷ μένουσαν, ἐπιμνήσομαι ἀμφοτέρων ὁμοίως ('I know that human prosperity does not endure, therefore I shall speak of both [great and small cities]').

vides the opportunity to point out the connection once more (2.1):

> Τελευτήσαντος δὲ Κύρου παρέλαβε τὴν βασιληίην Καμβύσης, Κύρου ἐὼν παῖς καὶ Κασσανδάνης τῆς Φαρνάσπεω θυγατρός . . . Ταύτης δὴ τῆς γυναικὸς ἐὼν παῖς καὶ Κύρου Καμβύσης Ἴωνας μὲν καὶ Αἰολέας ὡς δούλους πατρωίους ἐόντας ἐνόμιζε, ἐπὶ δὲ Αἴγυπτον ἐποιέετο στρατηλασίην, ἄλλους τε παραλαβὼν τῶν ἦρχε καὶ δὴ καὶ Ἑλλήνων τῶν ἐπεκράτεε.
>
> After the death of Cyrus, Cambyses became king, being the son of Cyrus and Cassandane, daughter of Pharnaspes . . . Being the son of this woman and of Cyrus, Cambyses regarded the Ionians and the Aeolians as slaves inherited from his father, and he undertook an expedition against Egypt, taking with him others over whom he ruled and especially those Greeks whom he had in his power.

After the narration of the Egyptian *logos*, which occupies all of Book Two and ends with his discussion of King Amasis, Herodotus picks up the thread again in a very accurate way (3.1):

> Ἐπὶ τοῦτον δὴ τὸν Ἄμασιν Καμβύσης ὁ Κύρου ἐστρατεύετο, ἄγων ἄλλους τε τῶν ἦρχε καὶ Ἑλλήνων Ἰωνάς τε καὶ Αἰολέας . . .
>
> It was against this Amasis that Cambyses, son of Cyrus, mounted an expedition, taking with him others over whom he ruled, and of the Greeks Ionians and Aeolians . . .

Thus Greeks do forced service in the army of a king who oppresses them. Most of Book Four is taken up by the account of Darius' expedition against the Scythians. Here, too, the Greeks of Asia Minor participate as Persian subjects. Darius crosses the Danube on a bridge constructed of their ships. Before he returns, the Greeks discuss whether to demolish the bridge in order to prevent the return of the Persian army (4.137–9). All of a sudden, here is an opportunity to liberate Ionia (ἐλευθεροῦν Ἰωνίην). The Scythians themselves advise (4.136): ἄπιτε χαίροντες ἐλεύθεροι ('Go, rejoicing to be free'). The opportunity, however, to reverse what Croesus and his initial *katastrepsasthai* had begun, is not taken. Emphasizing the freedom within reach, Herodotus makes this connection clear.

Book Five starts the concentrated narrative of the Graeco-Persian clashes in the fifth century, from the Ionian Revolt to the Battle of Plataeae. The *Histories* end with the liberation of Ionia, thus reaching a preliminary conclusion to those clashes. This shows that the work was conceived from the beginning with a view to its second half, that it was conceived as a whole. Even the final chapters (9.120–2),

which have been wrongly seen as evidence that the work remained unfinished,[25] are part of the larger plan: at the end the Athenians gather up the remains of the bridge of boats across the Hellespont, over which Xerxes had led his army into Europe in order to conquer Greece. This is a finale with great symbolic power. The fact that one last digression follows, *à propos* the mention of Artayctes, Persian governor of Sestos, shows that Herodotus follows the principle of the organization of his material consistently to the very end.

Legein and graphein

We have established that Herodotus composed his *Histories* with future readers in mind. In the following sections we hope to show that there are further signs of this intention. First let us examine how Herodotus describes his own activity as author of the *Histories*.[26]

His favourite word for it is doubtless λέγειν. It is frequently found in contexts such as: τὰ δὲ λέγεται ὑπὸ Χαλδαίων, ταῦτα λέγω ('What is told by the Chaldeans, I too say': 1.183) or νοήσας δὲ πρότερον αὐτὸς ἢ ἀκούσας ἄλλων λέγω ('I say this having understood it myself earlier than having heard it from others': 2.104). What Herodotus 'says' is linked with what others 'say' or 'have said'. One could get the impression that this is an oral element preserving the style of his lectures.

One should not, however, overlook the fact that Herodotus repeatedly uses γράφειν too: ὡς ὧν Περσέων μετεξέτεροι λέγουσι . . ., κατὰ ταῦτα γράψω ('As one part of the Persians say, I will write it down accordingly': 1.95); ἢδ' ὧν ἐμοὶ δοκέει ἀξιωτάτη ἀπηγήσιος εἶναι, ταύτην γράφω ('What seems to me to be the way most worth telling [of various ways to hunt crocodiles] that am I writing down': 2.70); τῶν ἐγὼ εἰδὼς τὰ οὐνόματα οὐ γράφω ('Although I know their names, I am not writing them down': 2.123); τὸ μὲν δὴ εἶδος ὁκοῖόν τι ἔχει ἡ κάμηλος, ἐπισταμένοισι τοῖσι Ἕλλησι οὐ συγγράφω ('I am not writing down what the camel looks like, since the Greeks know it': 3.103); ταῦτα εἰ μὲν ἔστι ἀληθέως οὐκ οἶδα, τὰ δὲ λέγεται γράφω ('Whether this is really so

[25] Among others Jacoby (1913) 372 ff. The controversy continues; three recent articles argue that the *Histories* are complete: Herington (1991), Oswald (1995) 57 ff., and Dewald (1997).

[26] In general on the authorial persona, see Ch. 12 in this volume.

I do not know; but I am writing down what is said': 4.195); τὸ ἐνθεῦτεν οὐκ ἔχω ἀτρεκέως συγγράψαι οἵ τινες τῶν Ἰώνων ἐγένοντο ἄνδρες κακοὶ ἢ ἀγαθοὶ ἐν τῇ ναυμαχίῃ ταύτῃ ('From this point on I cannot write accurately which of the Ionians proved cowardly or courageous men in this sea battle': 6.14); τάδε δὲ κατὰ τὰ λεγόμενα ὑπ' Ἑλλήνων ἐγὼ γράφω ('I write what follows on the basis of what is said by the Greeks': 6.53); τοῦτον αἴτιον γράφω ('This one I write down as guilty': 7.214).[27]

If one imagines the situation of an oral performance, it is immediately clear that γράφω said by somebody speaking is out of place; it is addressed to readers.[28] On the other hand, the interchangeable use of *legein* and *graphein* indicates that both verbs mean the same. If *legein* were really to be understood as a reflection of orality, we would have to admit a tension between two different styles preserved in the *Histories*. But this option can easily be ruled out: Herodotus knows and applies the metaphorical use of *legein* that is paralleled in modern languages: 'to *say* something in a written text.'[29] Thus we see Herodotus use *legein* in the introductory formula of a letter: Ἄμασις Πολυκράτεϊ ὧδε λέγει ('Thus says Amasis to Polycrates': 3.40), and above all one may point to 1.124: τὰ δὲ γράμματα ἔλεγε τάδε ('The letters said this').

As one can see, the examples of *graphein* are found throughout the entire *Histories*. The conclusion, however, that Herodotus did in fact wish the entire *Histories* to be regarded as a written work, intended for readers, does not follow from this observation alone. One last example, which has not been cited before, must be adduced here (2.123): ἐμοὶ δὲ παρὰ πάντα τὸν λόγον ὑπόκειται ὅτι τὰ λεγόμενα ὑπ' ἑκάστων ἀκοῇ γράφω ('Throughout my entire *logos* I act on the principle that I write down whatever is told me as I have heard it'). There is little reason to assume that Herodotus is referring here only to the Egyptian *logos*, not the entire *Histories*. For we find comparable general statements, with identical or similar phrasing, in two other passages, where it is impossible to believe that they apply to only a section of the work. One passage has been discussed already

[27] Cf. also 1.93: θώματα δὲ γῆ <ἡ> Λυδίη ἐς συγγραφὴν οὐ μάλα ἔχει ('Lydia has not many wonders worth writing down').

[28] This argument is already found in Röse (1879); cf. Powell (1939) 31 f. It is neglected by Hartog (1980) 292 ff., esp. 294.

[29] For examples from Isocrates, see Usener (1994) 98 ff.

(4.30): προσθήκας γὰρ δή μοι ὁ λόγος ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἐδίζητο ('my *logos* from the beginning'—which must mean 'the entire *logos*'); we will discuss the second passage below in greater detail (7.152):

> Ἐγὼ δὲ ὀφείλω λέγειν τὰ λεγόμενα, πείθεσθαί γε μὲν οὐ παντάπασιν ὀφείλω (καί μοι τοῦτο τὸ ἔπος ἐχέτω ἐς πάντα λόγον).
>
> I am obliged to say what is said; to believe it, however, I am not in the least obliged (and this statement shall apply to the entire *logos*).[30]

Thus there is no reason not to read Herodotus' statement of principle at 2.123 as the author's explicit confirmation of what we have so far been inferring: Herodotus composed the *Histories* for future readers, with a clear-cut concept and in a continuous process of writing.[31]

Legein ta legomena

We have seen on the basis of a selection of examples that Herodotus usually states that he says or writes what others say or have said. However, he goes further than this. In the last of the discussed passages he refers to his *obligation* 'to say what is said'—even when he believes it to be incorrect. The statement that this rule must apply to his entire *logos* is connected with two further statements of the same principle. We have already cited 2.123; which in its full form runs as follows:

> Τοῖσι μέν νυν ὑπ' Αἰγυπτίων λεγομένοισι χράσθω ὅτεῳ τὰ τοιαῦτα πιθανά ἐστι· ἐμοὶ δὲ παρὰ πάντα τὸν λόγον ὑπόκειται ὅτι τὰ λεγόμενα ὑπ' ἑκάστων ἀκοῇ γράφω.
>
> What is said by the Egyptians, that should he use who finds it credible. Throughout my entire *logos* I act on the principle that I write down whatever is told me, as I have heard it.

And finally 3.9:

> Οὗτος μὲν ὁ πιθανώτερος τῶν λόγων εἴρηται· δεῖ δὲ καὶ τὸν ἧσσον πιθανόν, ἐπεί γε δὴ λέγεται, ῥηθῆναι.

[30] The translation does not distinguish between πάντα τὸν λόγον (2.123) and πάντα λόγον (7.152; τὸν does, however, appear in one MS [M] and in Plut.; cf. Rosén (1997) *ad loc.*). Nouns with πᾶς but without an article where one would expect one, also occur elsewhere in Herodotus (Kühner and Gerth (1898) 633 f.).

[31] Strictly speaking, this one statement (2.123) alone seriously contradicts Jacoby's theory that finished manuscripts were worked into the *Histories*.

> The most credible version is recounted here; but the less credible must also be given, since it is being told.

The obligation 'to say what is said' even when it is not credible is thus one of the essential principles of the concept underlying the composition of the *Histories*.[32] It is obvious that it results from the same motivation which we have observed for the digressions. As the latter, it can be inferred from the timing and the intention of Herodotus when he wrote down his *Histories*. When, at an advanced age, he decided to give to his store of knowledge an existence independent of his own, anything omitted would be consigned to oblivion. Even where Herodotus himself was doubtful, someone else might still, as he puts it, 'make use' of it (χρᾶσθαι).[33]

Herodotus and 'Historicizing' His Own Time

The *Histories* contain a fairly large number of passages (about thirty) which are striking because Herodotus speaks of his own time in the past tense. They are easy to recognize because an indicator of time such as ἐπ' ἐμεῦ, κατ' ἐμέ, ἐς ἐμέ or μέχρι(ς) ἐμεῦ ('in my own time', 'until my own time') is used with a past tense, usually the imperfect, or the equivalent participle. Occasionally one encounters a present tense, but this is very much the exception. Thus the usage is obviously deliberate. Let us take a closer look at three of these passages.[34]

Among the dedicatory gifts which Amasis sent to Greece (2.182) were two wooden statues for Hera of Samos which represented himself and 'stood in the great temple until my own time, behind the door' (αἳ ἐν τῷ νηῷ τῷ μεγάλῳ ἱδρύατο ἔτι καὶ τὸ μέχρις ἐμεῦ ὄπισθε τῶν θυρέων). One is inclined to take this to mean 'when I last visited Samos'. Because Herodotus cannot be sure that there have not been changes, he does not say αἳ ἐν τῷ νηῷ τῷ μεγάλῳ ἱδρύαται ἔτι καὶ τὸ νῦν.[35] But this explanation would not hold good for a passage like 5.45:

[32] Cf. 2.125; 3.56; 4.195; 6.53.

[33] Cf., in addition to 2.123, 2.146: Τούτων ὦν ἀμφοτέρων πάρεστι χρᾶσθαι τοῖσί τις πείσεται λεγομένοισι μᾶλλον ('As for these two [Dionysos and Pan], people can make use of the version which they will find more convincing').

[34] What follows is discussed in more detail in Rösler (1991), cf. Johnson (1994) 252 n. 58 and Naiden (1999). The present *retractatio* goes further from a theoretical point of view.

[35] Such a turn of phrase is not alien to Herodotus, e.g., 1.50; 1.69 (very similar); 2.141.

> Οἱ δ' αὖ Κροτωνιῆται ἀποδεικνύουσι Καλλίῃ μὲν τῷ Ἠλείῳ ἐξαίρετα ἐν γῇ τῇ Κροτωνιήτιδι πολλὰ δοθέντα, τὰ καὶ ἐς ἐμὲ ἔτι ἐνέμοντο οἱ Καλλίεω ἀπόγονοι . . .
>
> The Crotoniates, on the other hand, point to many select estates on Crotoniate territory given to Callias of Elis, which were still used by Callias' descendants until my own time . . .

This cannot be a case of caution ('this was so when I last visited Croton; I do not know what may have happened since'). Croton is not far from Thurii, where Herodotus was writing; he would have known if any of the heirs had lost their land. The past tense is all the more striking, as the sentence begins with a present tense: 'The Crotoniates point today, in my own time . . .' This creates an immanent contradiction: the writer's 'own time' seems to be set both in the present and in the past. By accepting the contradiction, Herodotus shows that the use of the past tense is deliberate.

Above all it is important to mention 1.5, one of the fundamental statements in the *Histories*. This is where Herodotus for the first time and with programmatic emphasis pronounces his theory of historic change, the 'circle of human affairs' (κύκλος τῶν ἀνθρωπηίων πρηγμάτων: 1.207):

> . . . τοῦτον σημήνας προβήσομαι ἐς τὸ πρόσω τοῦ λόγου, ὁμοίως μικρὰ καὶ μεγάλα ἄστεα ἀνθρώπων ἐπεξιών. Τὰ γὰρ τὸ πάλαι μεγάλα ἦν, τὰ πολλὰ αὐτῶν σμικρὰ γέγονε· τὰ δὲ ἐπ' ἐμέο ἦν μεγάλα, πρότερον ἦν σμικρά.
>
> . . . him shall I point out, and then push on with my *logos*, dealing equally with small and great cities. For those that were once great, most of them have become small, and those that were great in my time, had previously been small.

This example may even more clearly show the contrast of tenses within one sentence. Herodotus re-creates himself as a figure of the past, to which he, as the author, looks back. The writer's glance back at himself coincides with the perspective of the future reader, whose perception of the *Histories* as a work from the past is anticipated in the text. One hardly needs to add that this would have been quite impossible in an oral delivery. Here is a further indication of the work's late date of composition and its author's novel objective. Even if the subtle technique of making himself a figure of the past is not carried out with perfect consistency, it deserves attention as an important—and, from a theoretical point of view, especially sophisticated—part of the plan which Herodotus developed for the composition of his work.

The purpose of this strategy is clear. It was Herodotus' intention to cut, as it were, the *Histories* loose from the time and the circumstances in which they were written. The 'historicizing' of the work makes it, paradoxically, appear to have been written both *by* Herodotus and *after* Herodotus. This creates the impression of a vacuum in time during which the *Histories* came into being. Once we have grasped that this smoke screen was put up deliberately, we immediately understand the distance which Herodotus puts between himself and the contemporary event of the Peloponnesian War—at the few places where he refers to it. We can read in Thucydides (2.8) how the outbreak of this war put all the Greeks into a state of the highest emotional excitement. We do not see much of this in Herodotus: the anger of the hero Talthybius 'awoke once again a long time thereafter, in the war between the Peloponnesians and the Athenians (χρόνῳ δὲ μετέπειτα πολλῷ ἐπηγέρθη κατὰ τὸν Πελοποννησίων καὶ Ἀθηναίων πόλεμον: 7.137). This sounds as if he were speaking of some quite distant war. And elsewhere we read (9.73): There has been a friendship between Decelcans and Spartans dating back to the mythical past, 'so that even in the war which broke out many years afterwards between the Athenians and the Peloponnesians, when the Lacedaemonians laid the rest of Attica waste, they did not touch Decelea' (οὕτω ὥστε καὶ ἐς τὸν πόλεμον τὸν ὕστερον πολλοῖσι ἔτεσι τούτων γενόμενον Ἀθηναίοισί τε καὶ Πελοποννησίοισι, σινομένων τὴν ἄλλην Ἀττικὴν Λακεδαιμονίων, Δεκελέης ἀπέχεσθαι).[36]

The Function of the Histories

Several indicators—chronology, organization of the material, and commitment to *legein ta legomena*—have shown that the *Histories* were put into written form because Herodotus felt the need to give his knowledge an existence independent of his own, and to preserve it for posterity. This conclusion, however, need not rely on indirect evidence. Herodotus spells it out himself very clearly and in a very prominent place, the opening sentence of the *Histories*:

> Ἡροδότου Ἁλικαρνησσέος ἱστορίης ἀπόδεξις ἥδε, ὡς μήτε τὰ γενόμενα ἐξ ἀνθρώπων τῷ χρόνῳ ἐξίτηλα γένηται, μήτε ἔργα μεγάλα τε καὶ θωμαστά, τὰ

[36] The contemporaneity of the Peloponnesian War likewise remains unexpressed in 6.98.

> μὲν Ἕλλησι, τὰ δὲ βαρβάροισι ἀποδεχθέντα, ἀκλεᾶ γένηται, τά τε ἄλλα καὶ δι' ἣν αἰτίην ἐπολέμησαν ἀλλήλοισι.
>
> This is the publication of the inquiry by Herodotus of Halicarnassus, so that what has been done by men shall not be lost with time nor shall great and amazing deeds, some done by Greeks, some by barbarians, be forgotten—among other things for what reason they fought each other.

Many interpretations have been suggested for this sentence.[37] If we look at it in the light of what we have observed so far, it turns out a clear and precise statement about the author's central motivation. This, then, was the function of the *Histories*: to prevent oblivion, to ensure lasting knowledge (*kleos*). That is why, at the end of his life, Herodotus wrote a work such as had never existed before, the work that we possess.

This statement—that *we* possess the work—is more than a mere truism. It points to the fact that Herodotus, the former *logographos*, achieved his objective. The information which he had assembled and had until then stored in his head and passed on orally, this knowledge has by the act of writing it down, and by that act alone, been saved from oblivion. That the *Histories* in their own time were no ἀγώνισμα ἐς τὸ παραχρῆμα ἀκούειν has already been shown. But we may just as well apply Thucydides' contrasting description of his own work to his predecessor: Herodotus' *Histories* already were intended as a κτῆμα ἐς αἰεί, a 'possession for ever'—and so they are.

[37] For a discussion, see Ch. 1 in this volume.

HERODOTUS AND HIS WORLD

CHAPTER FIVE

EPIC HERITAGE AND MYTHICAL PATTERNS IN HERODOTUS

Deborah Boedeker

The *Histories* is a work of monumental originality, and one that springs from monumental traditions. Readers of Herodotus both ancient and modern have found the imprint of Homeric epic on all levels of his text, from the occasional use of special poetic words, to literary tropes such as set speeches and dialogues, to overall range and purpose. Herodotus occasionally refers to epic characters and deeds; moreover, story-patterns familiar from myths emerge from time to time in the *Histories*—but attributed to historical characters and situations. Without wishing to minimize the extent to which Herodotus is a fifth-century author with contemporary intellectual and political concerns, I will consider in this chapter how epic and mythical traditions interact with his work, both by shaping the narrative of events and by influencing the scope and style of the work as a whole.

Herodotus Homērikōtatos?

In the second century BC, an elegant elegiac inscription listing Halicarnassus' many claims to fame was set up in Herodotus' hometown.[1] Prominent among the sources of civic pride is a list of literary figures, headed by Herodotus, who is described as 'the pedestrian (i.e. prose) Homer of historiography' (*ton pezon en historiaisin Homēron*). A few generations later, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, as if paraphrasing the inscription, wrote that Herodotus produced *pezēn phrasin* 'pedestrian speech' that resembled 'the most powerful (*kratistē*) poetry' (*On Thucydides* chap. 23; 6.865). Other ancient critics seem to have agreed

[1] Cf. Isager's *editio princeps* (1999), with further commentary by Lloyd-Jones (1999).

with Dionysius. The first-century CE author of *On the Sublime* called Herodotus (along with Stesichorus, Archilochus, and Plato) *homērikōtatos* 'most Homeric'.[2] In the late second century CE, the rhetorician Hermogenes of Tarsus wrote that Herodotus 'uses all kinds of mythical concepts and poetic diction throughout' (*kai gar tais ennoiais muthikais skhedon hapasais kai tēi lexei poiētikēi kekhrētai diholou: Id.* 408 Rade). Modern critics too have not failed to find large- and small-scale reflections of Homeric epic in the *Histories*.[3]

Aristotle, however, writing a century before the Halicarnassus inscription, emphasized the differences between epic and historiography. He maintained that Herodotus' work, with its focus on the particular (what actually happened) rather than the general (what would plausibly happen), would still be history and not poetry—which Aristotle considered a more 'philosophical' genre—even if the *Histories* were put into verse (*Poetics* 9, 1451a–b).[4] Aristotle also asserted that Herodotean history lacks the kind of organic unity that characterizes poetry (*Poetics* 23, 1459a). For example, when Herodotus reports that the battles of Himera in Sicily and Salamis near Athens were fought on the same day (7.166), Aristotle declares that the two victories have merely a chronological connection in the *Histories*, for they do not share a single goal (*telos*). Aristotle's criticism has itself been called into question,[5] yet clearly the lines have long been drawn between sophisticated readers of Herodotus who view him as a 'poetic' historian, and those who emphasize the gulf between history and poetry.[6] A look at convergences and divergences in a few salient areas will help us assess both of these perspectives.

On the broadest level, the parallels are very significant. The *Histories* shares both the *Iliad*'s focus on a great war fought by a coalition of Hellenes and the *Odyssey*'s interest in distant places and foreign cus-

[2] (Longinus) *Subl.* 13.3. Cf. other ancient sources on Herodotus and Homer, esp. Strabo 1, p. 18; Lucian *De hist. conscr.* 14; more generally, Quintilian 10.1.27 and 10.1.31: *historia est proxima poetis et quodammodo carmen solutum.*

[3] See e.g., Asheri (1988) lx–lxi for a concise list of resemblances; also Stambler (1982) 210–12, Huxley (1989), and Herington (1991b).

[4] Brillante (1990) 104–5, however, points out that myth is also concerned with particulars.

[5] For a critique of Aristotle's position, cf. Gomme (1954) 73–6, arguing that Herodotus 'regularly forsakes the chronological for a logical order' and is thereby 'the "poet" of his plot'. For Herodotus and tragedy, see Ch. 6 in this volume.

[6] On Herodotus' own criticism of poetry, see Boedeker (2000) 103–6.

toms; as more than one critic has discovered, Herodotus in some ways resembles the curious and well-travelled Odysseus.[7] Moreover, both epic and the *Histories* are concerned with preserving memory and conferring glory (*kleos*). In Homeric epic, characters and narrator alike are well aware of the fame that accrues to those who are remembered, presumably in song: Penelope worries that Telemachus, who has slipped off to sea and is now threatened by the suitors on his return, will not even leave behind a name for himself (*Od.* 4.710); Hector, challenging the best of the Achaeans to fight him, hopes that he will kill his man and his *kleos* will never perish (*Il.* 7.91). Homer's Helen at one point even uses the idea of future poetic fame to explain the events 'happening' in epic: she laments to Hector that Zeus placed an evil fate on Paris and herself so that they would become objects of song (*aoidimoi*) in the future (*Il.* 6.356–8).[8]

Herodotus stresses even more directly the importance of his narrative for preserving fame. In the Proem to the *Histories* he explains the very purpose of his work as the preservation of memory, '. . . so that human accomplishments may not become faded (*exitēla*) with time, nor may great and marvellous achievements, some performed by Greeks and some by barbarians, be without their fame (*akleā*)'.[9] Though the importance of preserving fame is common to both genres, they point to slightly different objects of *kleos*. In epic, *kleos* is presented as primarily important for the heroes, the *characters* who will be remembered, whereas Herodotus highlights the great *achievements* (*erga*) of Greeks and barbarians, and more generally 'the things that have come about from human beings' (*ta genomena ex anthrōpōn*).[10] Herodotus' concern with preserving a record of events contrasts somewhat with epic's interest in providing its heroes with immortality.

[7] For Odysseus-like characteristics of the Herodotean narrator, see Nagy (1990) 231–3 and Marincola (1997b). Herodotus' ethnographic passages differ greatly from those in the *Odyssey*, however, not only in the details supplied but in the focus they receive in the narrative. Herodotus typically describes a wide range of customs (especially sexual and funereal), geographical features and 'wonders' of the natural or human world. The *Odyssey* also describes the ways of others, but only as they affect Odysseus, whereas Herodotus includes ethnographies of many peoples who never cross paths with his protagonists.

[8] See also Cobet, this volume (Ch. 17, pp. 388–9).

[9] On the first sentence of Herodotus, see Nagy (1987) with bibliography as well as Bakker, Ch. 1, this volume, with more discussion of *kleos* (ἀκλεᾶ) and ἐξίτηλα.

[10] On the fundamental similarity of ἔργα and γενόμενα here, see Asheri (1988) xviii.

Another important and obvious distinction between the *Histories* and epic is reflected in the first words of each work, which indicate the speaker's source of knowledge about the past.[11] The two epic invocations, 'The Wrath sing, goddess, of Peleus' son Achilles', and 'Sing in me, Muse, the man of many turns', call on a source of knowledge very different from that reflected in the opening clause of the *Histories*, 'This is the presentation of the inquiry of Herodotus of Halicarnassus.' Nonetheless, it is significant that both Herodotus and Homer call attention to their sources of information—the Muse for Homer, his own investigations for Herodotus—as they begin their narratives. Rather than presenting a wholly mimetic work in the manner of drama or fiction, both authors emphasize at the outset that they are telling a story of past events and rely on sources (in part) external to themselves to do so. Herodotus frequently recalls his use of and critical relationship to a variety of sources, most of them oral, in the course of his work, whereas the epic poet very seldom mentions his reliance on the Muse(s)—let alone criticizes the goddess' veracity. Despite these variances, at the beginning of each work (*Iliad, Odyssey, Histories*) the narrator signals that he is not 'making it up'. This factor contributes to the sense of a truth that exists independently of the narrative and serves as a control for it. For all its differences from a Muse-inspired song, Herodotus' text shares with archaic epic the important perception that there is an external referent to the narrative.

In addition to the large-scale resemblances in theme and purpose, the *Histories* in some ways *sounds* like Homeric epic as well. Herodotus' language is a form of Ionic Greek, which was the literary language typical of 'scientific' prose works in his day—attested also in the medical treatises of Hippocrates of Cos, the geographic writings of Hecataeus of Miletus, and the philosophical prose of Heraclitus of Ephesus. This dialect, however, has much in common as well with the earlier Ionic that is the largest component of Homer's traditional poetic language (see Hermogenes *Id.* 336 Rabe), and sometimes that resemblance comes to the fore in the *Histories*.

[11] Romm (1998) 20: 'No longer can the Muse be invoked as a guarantor of authenticity; human powers of investigation and reason have been called upon to take the place of this reverend goddess.' Thomas (2000) 267 suggests that Herodotus' Proem 'present(s) a daring mixture . . . of Homeric reference and hints of the currently fashionable language of intellectual activity.'

Especially in the speeches he ascribes to his characters, Herodotus uses a number of phrases that clearly recall the formulations of epic. 'I won't hide it away from you or pretend I don't know . . . but I will tell you exactly', says Pythius the wealthy Lydian to Xerxes, who inquired how rich he was (7.28.1). Menelaus says much the same thing to Telemachus, when asked what news he has of Odysseus: 'I will hide no word of this from you nor will I conceal it' (*Od.* 4.350).[12] Even more strikingly, Syagrus the Spartan tells Gelon, the tyrant of Syracuse, that 'Agamemnon would groan aloud' (*ē ke meg' oimōxeie*) if he heard that Gelon and the Syracusans had seized the leadership of the Greek forces from the Spartans (*Hist.* 7.159), just as Nestor says that Peleus would do (*ē ke meg' oimōxeie*) if he saw all the Achaeans shrinking before Hector (*Il.* 7.125).

Herodotus probably did not borrow directly from the *Iliad* or *Odyssey* every expression that has an epic parallel, nor was it necessary for his audience to recall specific Homeric passages whenever such a phrase is used—especially if that phrase is the only 'echo' of epic in its passage. Expressions such as 'I won't hide the truth from you', or 'So-and-So would groan if he heard that . . .' might have originated in epic language but passed into rhetorical commonplaces; they might just as well have come to epic from ordinary speech. For Herodotus' audience such phrases would doubtless have a generally poetic quality (such as Hermogenes *Id.* 336 Rabe attributes to the *Histories*), but probably not a specific referent.[13]

A more developed echo of epic is found in Herodotus' use of the metaphor 'on a razor's edge' (*epi xurou akmēs*) to describe a crisis calling for decisive action. Nestor uses the phrase in rousing Diomedes to warn him of the threatening Trojans:

> Now indeed it stands on a razor's edge for all,
> whether there will be very great destruction for the Achaeans, or survival.
> But go now, awaken swift Aias and Phyleus' son,
> since you are younger, if you pity me. (*Iliad* 10.173–6)

In Herodotus' account of the Ionian rebellion, the Phocaean commander Dionysius, exhorting his fellow Ionians to fight the Persians, speaks similarly:

[12] The following examples and others are collected in Jacoby (1913) 502–3.

[13] See Giraudeau (1984b) 4–5 for a succinct collection of Homeric images and expressions attested also in Herodotus.

> Our affairs are on a razor's edge, men of Ionia, whether we will be free or slaves—and these would be runaway slaves. Now therefore if you are willing to accept hard discipline, there will be toil for you for the moment, but you will be able to overcome the enemy and be free. (6.11.2)

In this case, the situations are closely parallel: a military leader calls for decisive action in a moment of crisis, stating the alternative outcomes ('whether . . . or') and calling for immediate action, as long as his hearer(s) are of a sympathetic frame of mind ('now . . . if you'). In this case and others where the parallels are extensive, the Homeric colouring of Herodotus' narrative is especially strong, and for many readers may even recall a specific passage in epic.[14]

Another example shows Herodotus' versatility in using a familiar Homeric expression. Artabanus warns Mardonius that if he persists in his foolish plan to lead the Persian army to Greece, those who stay behind

> will hear that Mardonius, having done great harm to Persia, was torn apart by dogs and birds somewhere in the land of the Athenians or the Lacedaemonians, if not even sooner while en route. (7.10 θ 3)

For Herodotus and his audience these words recall the threatening Iliadic image of the unburied corpse, mutilated by scavenging animals on the battlefield (*Iliad* 1.4–5, etc.). Yet in his ethnographic discussion of Persian funeral customs, Herodotus reports:

> It is said that the body of a Persian man is not buried until it has been mauled by a bird or a dog. I know for certain that the Magi do this, because they let it happen in public; but the Persians cover corpses in wax before burying them in the ground. (1.140)

The ethnographic passage emphasizes how Persians differ from Greeks: the Magi, at least, welcome a post-mortem fate that Greeks fear—the very fate which the Persian Artabanus foresees for Mardonius. Rather than using the Homeric tag consistently, Herodotus adopts it for two quite different effects: underlining cultural differences in the ethnographic passage, but assuming a common human horror of mutilation by scavengers in the warning speech of Artabanus. Both passages, however, rely for their effect on the audience's familiarity with the Homeric motif of 'dogs and birds'.[15]

[14] Huber (1965b) makes the point that Herodotus both unconsciously 'continues' Homeric style and deliberately alludes to or borrows from it. See further below.

[15] The image of a corpse being prey to dogs, or dogs and birds, is not restricted

On a larger scale too, extended sections of the *Histories* bring to mind Homeric passages. The long 'catalogue of ships' in the *Iliad*, describing all the Greek contingents that fought at Troy (2.494–760), finds an echo in Herodotus' equally elaborate catalogue of the units in Xerxes' armada—infantry, cavalry, and fleet—against mainland Greece (7.61–99).[16] Equally reminiscent of a Homeric passage (and one from the same book of the *Iliad*!) is Herodotus' elaborate description of the Dream that disastrously orders Xerxes to invade mainland Greece or suffer dire consequences (7.12–18); of course the consequences of Xerxes' expedition will turn out to be disastrous for the Persians. The Iliadic Agamemnon too is visited by a deceptive dream, which leads him to believe that he will be able to take the city of Troy on that very day; this belief ultimately leads to prolonged fighting and a serious (though not decisive) setback for the Achaeans (*Il.* 2.1–40). In both these cases, Herodotus seems clearly to have based the pattern of his narrative on the *Iliad*.[17]

Occasionally Herodotus also echoes the rhythms of epic. For example, he reports that when the citizens of Delphi received an oracle before the battle of Artemisium, directing the Greek allies to pray to the winds, they passed along the advice, and—in a perfect hexameter—'announcing this, they stored away undying gratitude' (*exangeilantes kharin athanaton katethento*, 7.178.2).[18] Such a passage gives Herodotus' report a solemn epic resonance (cf. Hermogenes *Id.* 408 Rabe), here in connection with a rather 'heroic' theme: divine assistance and patriotic solidarity for the allied Greeks.

The striking physical resemblance to epic language, including snatches of hexametric rhythms, may in some instances echo a poetic account that lies behind a particular story in Herodotus.[19] Recently published papyrus fragments of an extended elegy by Simonides on the Battle of Plataea, for example, remind us that poems were

in pre-Herodotean literature to Homer (cf. Soph. *Ant.* 29–30 birds only), but it occurs there so frequently (fifteen times in the *Iliad* and twice in the *Odyssey*) that it would doubtless sound 'Homeric' to Herodotus' addressees.

[16] See Erbse (1992) 125–7 for discussion of Homeric influence on the catalogue of Xerxes' troops.

[17] On the dreams, see also Saïd, this volume (Ch. 6, pp. 142–4).

[18] Hornblower (1994a) 65–9 discusses Homeric speech and rhythms in Herodotus and Thucydides; see also Boedeker (2001) 121–4. Chiasson (1982) similarly looks at traces of tragic diction and meter in Herodotus (see also Ch. 6, note 6 in this volume).

[19] Cf. Boedeker (2001) 123–4.

composed to commemorate all the great battles of the Persian War—all, at least, that were fought on (or near) the Greek mainland and described by Herodotus.[20] The Plataea poem, it appears, was famous in Herodotus' time; echoes of it can be detected in fifth-century poetry from Aeschylus to Timotheus (Rutherford (2001) 44, 46). I argue elsewhere that Herodotus knew this poem as well, and relied on it in certain respects in constructing his own scenario of the decisive battle (Boedeker (2001) 121–34).

Occasionally, then, echoes of poems commemorating historical events may account for epic-like language in Herodotus. Even when that is the case, however, it is important to consider why the historian chooses to 'sound' Homeric at certain junctures. In general, hexametric rhythms and Homeric turns of phrase are most apparent in the speeches; these passages are also *homērikōtata* in their vivid mimetic quality. Is Herodotus most likely to use snatches of Homeric language in his characters' speeches simply because these are points of greatest congruence with Homeric narrative technique? Or is the use of epic-sounding language a way for Herodotus deliberately to make a character, or a section of narrative, sound larger-than-life, more heroic, or even more archaic?[21]

Besides its echoes of Homeric passages, great and small, the *Histories* shares many compositional features with Homeric epic. Like an epic poet, for example, Herodotus frequently uses ring composition or 'epic regression' as a way of supplying background information for something discussed in the narrative.[22] First an event is mentioned briefly, then its precedents are reviewed in reverse chronological order as far back as necessary; at that point the narrative reverses

[20] Parsons (1992) 4–50 (*editio princeps* of *P. Oxy.* 3965) and West (1992) fr. el. 1–22. For discussion of the 'new Simonides', see West (1993) and Boedeker and Sider (2001). On Herodotus and archaic historical poetry, see the important essays of Lasserre (1976) and Verdin (1977).

[21] Klamp (1930) 892, for example, finds decidedly poetic style, including two examples of tmesis and a high degree of assonance, in a Herodotean passage (2.30–40) dealing with what he judges to be prehistoric magical rites; he concludes that Homeric form matches archaic content.

[22] Pearce (1981), citing Krischer (1971) 136 ff. on ring composition in Homeric epic. Pearce's examples include *Hist.* 1.29–30 (how Solon leaves Athens and comes to Sardis), 1.65–9 (Croesus learns that Sparta gained hegemony over Tegea), and 3.1 (why Cambyses goes to war against Amasis). See also Bakker (1997a) 119–22, and Slings, this volume (Ch. 3, pp. 71–3), who discuss ring composition as an 'oral strategy'; see also de Jong, this volume (Ch. 11, pp. 260–1), who deals with ring composition as a narrative strategy.

itself and moves forward in chronological order until the event in the main narrative line is reached again. As Mabel Lang points out, Herodotus, like the epic narrator, inserts digressions right after introducing a new topic, 'where suspense is sufficient to keep the audience involved' (Lang (1984) 7–9), or directs the narrative by asking rhetorical questions—though far more often, and with a more critical attitude, than is the case in epic.[23] In addition, as Hartmut Erbse ((1992) 127–31) demonstrates, the *Histories* closely follows epic techniques for reporting simultaneous actions in different places. Irene de Jong ((1999)) usefully outlines further ways in which Herodotus follows, and differs from, Homeric narratological technique.

The *Histories* resembles Homeric epic not only in structures but in attitudes as well, including a (surprising?)[24] lack of chauvinism. Although the Persian Wars are told from a Hellenic point of view, with ethnic and cultural differences highlighted, Herodotus does not in general demonize the 'barbarian' enemy. Brave deeds of Persians (and their allies) as well as Greeks are recorded, as are deliberations and decisions—some wiser or more honourable than others—on both sides. Even Xerxes can receive heroic (or is it ironic?) praise: of all the many thousands in his armada, no one could match him in beauty or stature, to be more worthy to hold power (7.187).

Herodotus' impetus toward (relatively) non-partisan historiography is related to what Christian Meier has called his 'multi-subjective' perspective, as opposed to a record of deeds that glorifies a single monarch or god. Meier (1987) attributes this breadth of perspective to specific political circumstances in fifth-century Greek culture, particularly a tendency toward democratization and a corresponding sense of the individual's role in political decision making. At the same time, however, sympathetic portrayal of the non-Greek enemy is a characteristic deeply embedded in the *Iliad*.[25] Both a narrative model and a socio-political attitude, it seems, were available to

[23] Lang (1984) 39–40: 'Unlike Homer's own questions, which seem to invoke the authority of the Muses, [Herodotus'] actually question authority and introduce an element of debate.'

[24] Hall (1989) shows how Athenian tragedy, though contemporary with Herodotus' work, took a very different path with regard to the contrast between Greeks and barbarians.

[25] Less so the *Odyssey*, which tends to depict Odysseus' enemies, from the Cyclops to the Suitors, unsympathetically. See Strasburger (1972) 25; Gomme (1954) 47, 111–12.

influence Herodotus' portrayal of non-Greeks—along with some non-elites and women—as sympathetic, intelligent, and courageous historical agents.

Hermann Strasburger argues for the profound influence of Homer on Greek historiography; he attributes this especially to the truly historical sense of epic, as seen in its attempt to characterize an era different from the present—one with weapons of bronze not iron, with stronger men and grand palaces.[26] As Susanna Stambler ((1982) 212) points out, however, the *Histories*, with its interest in 'first discoverers' and positive developments especially in political institutions, displays a sense of historical *progress* that is quite absent from epic.

Arguably, the most important and far-reaching resemblance between Herodotus and Homer is the mimetic quality of their narratives. Like Homeric epic, the *Histories* not only records the results of past actions, but presents an imaginative, dramatic recreation of how and why the actions took place.[27] Related to this is epic's concern with verisimilitude, as seen in its careful exposition of cause and effect (as with the chain of events leading up to Achilles' wrath, clearly developed at the beginning of the *Iliad*), and an emphasis on truthfulness and exactness in reporting: Odysseus at one point even provides a 'source' for information he could not be expected to know himself (*Od.* 12.389–90).[28] One of the most effective devices for creating this vividness is the use of speeches to reveal the characters, motives, and fates of historical actors, a technique in which Herodotus is conspicuously influenced by Homer.[29] Another salient mimetic feature that the *Histories* share with epic is the frequent description of non-verbal communication—gestures, sounds, postures, expressions that richly express, as Donald Lateiner ((1987) 84) puts it, 'states of being beyond the report of intentional action and conscious communication'. As Lateiner points out, for example, gestures can eloquently indicate transgressive behaviour (the suitor Antinoos throws a footstool at Odysseus the 'beggar', *Od.* 17.462–5; Persian emissaries fondle the breasts of the Macedonian women at Amyntas' court, *Hist.* 5.18),

[26] Strasburger (1972) 27–9. Other important discussions also in Huber (1965b), Huxley (1989), Brillante (1990) 98–102, Erbse (1992) 122–32, Romm (1998) 16–17.

[27] Fornara (1971a) 35–6, Strasburger (1972) 38–9.

[28] Cause and effect, Strasburger (1972) 24–5; exactness of report, *ibid.* 21. See also Immerwahr (1966) 73.

[29] Waters (1966) 157–71 and (1985) 68; Asheri (1988) lx with bibliographical footnote.

as well as extremes of emotion (angry Achilles throws down the sceptre, *Il.* 1.245–6; the deposed king Demaratus wordlessly covers his head, *Hist.* 6.67.3).[30]

How are we to understand the many parallels between Herodotus and Homer? Certain resemblances between epic and history may stem from a common origin rather than from imitation or borrowing. Ernst Risch has argued, for example, that Indo-European celebratory ('feierlich') prose narratives share with narrative poetry certain linguistic/stylistic features, such as the tendency to begin a sentence with a verb.[31] Mabel Lang, examining Herodotus' compositional techniques such as the placement of digressions, links between passages, use of rhetorical questions, and the like, concludes that these patterns make it easier for an audience to follow the narrative line, and thus are evidence of Herodotus' oral style[32]—in other words they are not so much influenced by as shared with Homer. Other scholars prefer to speak of such techniques as typical of epideictic rhetoric, rather than oral origins.[33]

It is frequently stated or assumed that Herodotus reflects Homeric style because archaic epic was the only available model for the sustained narrative of great events.[34] This idea is supported by the impression that Herodotus' text resembles epic more obviously in the deliberative and action-oriented parts of the *Histories* and less so in the discursive ethnographic sections. This assumption needs to be

[30] Lateiner (1987) 85, 93, 103.

[31] Risch (1985) 8–9 (citing Wackernagel). Although Risch does not comment on this fact, the examples he cites usually include the verb 'to be' at the start of a new episode. See also Fornara's remark ((1971a) 68) on the force of ἦν δέ for Herodotus' introduction of Themistocles (7.143) and the *Iliad*'s of Dolon (10.314). For a linguistic (rather than stylistic) approach to this phenomenon, see Slings, this volume (Ch. 3, *ad* ex. (2a), p. 55).

[32] Lang (1984) 68–9 and *passim*; cf. also Nagy (1987), on Herodotus as a *logios* or performer of tales in prose. Johnson (1994) argues against this picture of Herodotus. Huber (1965b) argues that Herodotus both 'continues' Homeric style and deliberately imitates or alludes to it. I note that although a context of oral performance is very likely the origin of Herodotus' epic-like structuring devices, it is far from their only context; ring composition, for example, is widespread even in much later ancient authors writing for highly literate audiences; for a few examples in Roman literature, see Pearce (1981) 89, nn. 4–5.

[33] De Jong (1999) 227–9; see also Thomas (2000) 257–69 and *passim* for arguments that Herodotus presented parts of the *Histories* as oral 'lectures' (and see Bakker, this volume (Ch. 1), on the differences between Nagy's and Thomas' approaches to an 'oral' Herodotus).

[34] E.g., Lateiner (1987) 84, Herington (1991b), Erbse (1992) 122–32.

tested and refined; a comprehensive study of where and how the *Histories* uses verbal echoes of epic would illuminate both Herodotus' relationship with his most conspicuous model and the general development of Greek prose.

Oswyn Murray explains Herodotus' resemblance to Homer not by assuming necessity or inevitability: he boldly maintains that Herodotus' many resemblances to Homer 'are part of a conscious attempt to present the history of the Persian Wars as the history of a new Trojan War won by a new race of heroes'.[35] In some passages this is surely the case, as for example the battle over the corpse of Leonidas at Thermopylae (7.225) with its unmistakable echo of the long fight over Patroclus (*Iliad* 17). Interestingly, the 'new' fragments of Simonides' elegy on the battle of Plataea (see above) now show that the two wars were seen as analogous significantly before Herodotus. Simonides first recalls the destruction of Troy and the 'undying fame' which the Danaans received from that poet who learned the truth from the Muses; then he summons his own Muse to help him adorn his song to bring 'undying fame' to 'those who marched[?] out of Sparta to ward off the day of slavery' from Greece (Simonides, fr. el. 11.13–28 West). The parallels are astonishingly clear.

Along with so many similarities, however, it is important to remember that Herodotus consciously differentiates his work from epic.[36] At several junctures he criticizes poets as untrustworthy sources. The most salient example of this comes in a discussion of what really happened during the siege of Troy (2.116): Herodotus declares that Homer knew the more plausible story that Helen was not really at Troy but in Egypt—yet Homer did not consider that version suitable for an epic poem. Indeed, as a number of scholars have recently argued from very different perspectives, in clearly recalling epic themes and language (especially in the proem), Herodotus is not only paying homage to Homer but challenging his primacy.[37]

Nevertheless, Herodotus deserves his ancient epithet *homērikōtatos*: his text again and again recalls the language, style, structure, mimetic quality, and sometimes even metre of Homeric epic. It may be

[35] Murray (1988) 463. Similarly van Effenterre (1967) 19, cited by Giraudeau (1984b) 4: 'Son histoire des guerres médiques avait forcément pour les Grecs une allure d'épopée. Le style de l'écrivain s'en est souvent ressenti: l'ionien même d'Hérodote est quelque peu "homérisé"'.

[36] Cf. Verdin (1977) esp. 60–1, Boedeker (2000) 103–5.

[37] E.g., Hartog (1988) 276, 315; Nagy (1987); Thomas (2000) 267.

difficult to determine where Herodotus has deliberately adopted an epic model, in contrast to where his language unconsciously resembles epic discourse. It is no exaggeration, however, to say that without Homeric epic's sustained narrative of great deeds behind it, the *Histories* would not exist at all; and without its variegated reflections of epic style, it would be a very different work.

Herodotus Mythologos?

The text of Herodotus interacts frequently not only with epic narrative but with myths in general—by which I mean traditional, culturally significant stories, often involving gods or heroes. For a connoisseur of rhetoric and style such as Hermogenes, Herodotus' ubiquitous mythic quality (*to muthikon*) is a delightful feature, the source of much of his characteristic 'sweetness' (*glukotēs*, *Id.* 330–1, 408 Rabe). Hermogenes judges those stories to be sweetest that are truly 'mythical' (*muthōdēs*), such as Pan's epiphany to Philippides (*Hist.* 6.105), and somewhat less pleasing the narratives that 'share a little of the mythic quality but are more credible than myths' (330–1 Rabe). In a very different spirit, Aristotle disparagingly refers to Herodotus as *ho muthologos* 'the myth-teller' (*Gen. an.* 3.5.755b6). The epithet in this context is not a comment on Herodotus' use of supernatural stories, however, but on his inaccuracy. In a discussion about how fish reproduce, the philosopher blames Herodotus for passing along the silly tale (*ton euēthē logon*) that the females of one species conceive by swallowing the milt emitted by the males (*Hist.* 2.93). Herodotus himself uses the word *muthos* only twice,[38] both times as a label of disapproval directed polemically against those ('the poets' in 2.23, 'the Greeks' in 2.45) who perpetrate implausible information.[39] For Herodotus as for Aristotle, *muthos* is someone else's fabulous and incredible story.[40]

There are of course many reports in the *Histories* of objects, events, and customs that would seem implausible to Herodotus and his

[38] Nickau (1990) 84.

[39] See Marincola (1987) 128–31, Darbo-Peschanski (1987) 112, and Dewald, this volume (Ch. 12, pp. 278–79) on the competitive character of Book Two.

[40] On this use of *muthos* by Herodotus and the way the term is used against him by later critics, see Hartog (1988) 295–6.

addressees. The historian takes care to distance himself from such *logoi* with the famous disclaimer that he tells what was said but doesn't necessarily believe it (7.152.3), or sometimes by overtly stating his disbelief (as in 8.8).[41] Occasionally he reports a supernatural tale and offers an alternative rationalizing explanation, as with the tale that Poseidon caused a ravine to appear in Thessaly. This is a credible story, Herodotus remarks, for those who attribute earthquakes to Poseidon, since it appears to him that the ravine was made by an earthquake (7.129).[42] In this story, Herodotus applies the same standards of credibility whether an event took place recently or in the distant past. Yet occasionally, as Justus Cobet discusses in Chapter 17 of this volume (pp. 405 ff.), he seems to make a distinction between a *spatium mythicum* and a *spatium historicum*—especially when he distinguishes the remote era of Minos from 'the so-called human age (*geneē*)' of Polycrates (3.122). Scholars disagree about the degree to which Herodotus conceives of a 'mythical' time in which the world operated differently from 'historical' time; as with many issues in Herodotus, the text allows arguments on both sides.[43] In general, however, time and place enjoy continuity in the *Histories*, as do the operating conditions of the world.

More problematic for Herodotus' standing as a historian than his recording of unverifiable events distant in time is his use of 'historical' stories that follow narrative patterns known from myths.[44] A particularly rich example is the tale of how Cyrus came to power (1.107–30), told in the narrator's own persona rather than identified as 'what they say', but nevertheless replete with elements familiar from myth and folklore.[45] Prophetic dreams warn King Astyages that his daughter's son will depose him; Astyages orders a trusted courtier,

[41] See also Bakker, this volume (Ch. 1, pp. 13–19), on Herodotus' *historiē*.

[42] See also 2.54–7: how the priestesses of Zeus came to Dodona from Egypt, and why they are called 'doves'. On the phenomenon in general, cf. How and Wells (1912) 1:32–3.

[43] Scholars arguing that Herodotus observes such a distinction include Nesselrath (1996) 276, Vandiver (1991) *passim*, and Shimron (1973). Among those who disagree are Nickau (1990), and Hunter (1982) 103. Brillante (1990) 102 maintains that the heroic past was continuous with the historical period, and not confused with a 'time of origins' or 'age of the gods', which was very different from the age of human beings. See also Raaflaub (Ch. 7, n. 36) and Osborne (Ch. 22, p. 799).

[44] For a discussion of these (short) stories, see Gray, in this volume (Ch. 13).

[45] For a concise discussion, see Aly (1969) 48–51; see also Saïd, this volume (Ch. 6, pp. 128–29).

Harpagos, to kill the dangerous baby, but Harpagos has not the heart to do so; the royal foundling is 'rescued' rather than killed by a good-hearted herdsman and his wife (and a still more fabulous variant, that the child was fostered by an animal, hides behind the wife's name, 'Bitch', cf. 1.122.3); the true nature of the child is revealed and eventually the prophetic dreams prove true. Intertwined with the widespread legend of the royal foundling is a motif well known from the Greek myth of Atreus and Thyestes: Astyages punishes Harpagos for not killing Cyrus in the first place, by serving him the cooked flesh of his own son (1.118–19). As in the house of Atreus, this trick of cannibalism brings its own revenge, for Harpagos, remembering the fate of his son, is the one who encourages Cyrus to rise up against Astyages (1.123–4).

Herodotus' story of the Spartan king Demaratus provides a second example of a historical character linked with mythical motifs.[46] Demaratus' co-king Cleomenes challenged his legitimacy, on the grounds that when he was born, the alleged father, King Ariston, declared that the baby could not be his, because it was born only seven months after his wife came to him from her previous husband (6.63, 65). Soon after he was unfairly deposed from his kingship, Demaratus demanded to know the truth about his birth. His mother swore to him that he was the son either of Ariston or of a local Spartan hero, Astrabacus. Astrabacus, she said, had come to her in the guise of her new husband and slept with her soon after her marriage to Ariston; then on the same night the king himself came to her bed—and that was the night she conceived her son (6.69). This tale of the Heraclid king Demaratus closely parallels the birth story of his ancestor Heracles, the son of Alcmena who was loved by Zeus and Amphitryon on the same night; it seems very likely to have been passed along by pro-Demaratus sources at Sparta or elsewhere. In this case, it appears, a mythical pattern applied to a 'historical' event probably originated with Herodotus' sources and was motivated by political or familial reasons.

Perhaps because the legendary elements in the birth stories of Cyrus or Demaratus are so transparent, there has been little temptation for scholars to try to separate factual kernels from mythical

[46] See further Burkert (1965); see again Saïd, this volume (Ch. 6, p. 126).

chaff in those tales.[47] This has not been the case, however, with other stories in which fabulous elements blend with what appear to be historical reports.[48] A disturbing question arises: can stories that include mythical patterns also incorporate real historical events? A story attached to Periander, who became tyrant of Corinth a generation or two before the accession of Cyrus in Persia, can serve as a test case for this question.[49]

Periander's son Lycophron, learning that his father killed his mother, refuses to have anything to do with his father—including inheriting the tyranny of Corinth. At length he agrees to go to Corcyra to rule the Corinthian colony there. The aging Periander, still anxious to secure his family's dynasty in Corinth, later persuades Lycophron to trade places with him; but before Periander can arrive in Corcyra and take over the rule, the Corcyreans kill Lycophron. In revenge, Periander orders three hundred Corcyrean youths to be sent to Lydia, made into eunuchs, and sold into slavery. On their way to Lydia, however, the boys are given asylum by the Samians, who institute a festival in their honour (3.48, 50–3). Although historians usually assume that at least the outline of this tale is true,[50] Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood argues forcefully that it is so pervasively based on mythical and ideological constructs, such as the consequences of opposition between fathers and sons, that a historical core cannot be reconstructed with any degree of certainty.[51]

Other scholars find mythical and ideological elements within the Periander story without addressing so directly the important question of its historicity. For Michael Stahl (1983) it is a moral-political tale about the depravity of tyranny. For Jean-Pierre Vernant, the whole tale of the Cypselid dynasty reflects the 'crookedness' of the tyrant, from the lameness of Periander's ancestor Labda to his out-of-balance relationship with Lycophron—motifs found also in the myth of Oedipus: 'When the father of history recounts as fact the

[47] Brelich (1958) 59-60 and *passim* warns against trying to reconstruct history from myths. Brillante (1990) 108–10 provides illuminating discussion.

[48] See How and Wells (1912) 1:35.

[49] Aly (1969) 93–5 discusses the many folktale elements in Herodotus' stories of the Cypselids.

[50] As in *OCD*[3] s.v. Periander.

[51] Sourvinou-Inwood (1988); she would allow only that the Cypselid tyranny came to an end soon after Periander's death (p. 181).

events which installed a line of tyrants at the head of Corinth, quite "naturally" he mythologizes' (Vernant (1982) 33).

Each of these accounts is illuminating, yet to see how mythical patterns work in a 'historical' narrative, I agree with Claude Calame that we must take into account the Herodotean context—the discourse of which it is a part and the community to which it was addressed—as well as the mythical schemata that give the story its structure.[52] Along with elements reflecting Greek familial values and social ideologies, which Sourvinou-Inwood demonstrates so effectively, it seems to me quite plausible that political or philosophical concerns (on the part of Herodotus himself or his sources) would inform a story. Depending on the circumstances in which the tale is told, story-tellers and their audiences are not necessarily concerned only with the familial and social themes so prevalent in myths, especially the myths of Attic tragedy.

The little Periander-Lycophron tragedy is recounted as background to Herodotus' story of an attempted coup by disaffected Samians against their tyrant Polycrates, in the time of Cambyses (3.39-60).[53] Polycrates' opponents solicit help from Sparta; Corinth too is happy to assist them in attacking Samos, because somewhat earlier the Samians had rescued the youths of Corcyra whom Periander was shipping to Lydia (3.48). Herodotus comments that Corinth and Corcyra had been at odds ever since Corinth founded its colony at Corcyra; without those hostilities, Corinth would not have joined the expedition against Samos (3.49.1). The grudge between Lycophron and his father Periander is reflected in that between Corcyra and its 'parent' city Corinth (obvious in Herodotus' time: Thuc. 1.38, etc.), and indirectly causes the hostility between Corinth and Samos. This web of resentments, with parent/child hostility at its core, now plays into the hands of the Samians looking for support in their insurrection against Polycrates.[54] In Herodotus, the political is always (also) personal, and the two often stand in metonymic relationship to one another.[55] The story of Periander and Lycophron is revealing

[52] Calame (1990) 281. White (1978) carries this idea further, saying that the kind of discourse (or genre) itself greatly influences the shape of the story. See Sourvinou-Inwood (1988) 168 on mythological 'schemata'.

[53] On this story, see also Ch. 6, pp. 126–27, in this volume as well as Ch. 22, p. 503.

[54] For a different perspective on such webs, see 'the reciprocity model' discussed by Gould (1989) 82–5.

[55] Benardete (1969) takes a similar approach to the relationship between personal

not only for its connections to the themes of other myths, as Sourvinou-Inwood and Vernant emphasize, but also for its relationship to Herodotus' central historical themes of tyranny and the causes of war.

The problem of historicity in such 'mythologized' accounts remains acute.[56] It is indisputable that mythical and historical materials converge in the examples discussed. This is to be expected, especially since the stories were orally transmitted; they were orally formed as narratives, for that matter, and were most likely influenced by the shape of myths or folktales from the very beginning, as well as by Homeric and other poetic models (see above). Still, I am a little less pessimistic than Sourvinou-Inwood about the historical core that remains, partly because elements of the story seem to be conveyed in different places (Samos and Corinth, for example). I agree with Carol Dougherty's generalization in her analysis of Greek foundation myths: 'Since Greek colonial legends, like all narratives, are not clear, untroubled reflections of some historical truth but rather are literary representations of that truth, they stand in a complicated relationship to the events they relate' (Dougherty (1993) 7). There is no way around it: that relationship must be analysed for each case, bringing to bear all the kinds of evidence that exist.

Besides presenting some stories that replicate mythical patterns, Herodotus also introduces certain well-known myths (understood by his audience, to be sure, as events that really happened in the past, see Brillante (1990) 101–2) as relevant background to events in his narrative. Of course there is the sequence of rapes between Europe and Asia, culminating in the Trojan War, which Herodotus says the Persian *logioi* present as the cause of hostility between Asia and Europe (1.1–5). In this case, myth (as ancient history) motivates—or provides the alleged justification for—'history'. In several striking instances, however, a character from the heroic past (especially the Trojan War era) is said by Herodotus himself, or by his informants, to cause events that occur in the narrative line.

Herodotus speaks in his own persona about Talthybius (7.133–4, 137).[57] The herald of the Achaeans at Troy, Talthybius was hon-

tales and historical themes. See further Boedeker (1987) on the themes connected with Demaratus.

[56] Sebeok and Brady (1979) 12–14, taking a view almost as extreme as Sourvinou-Inwood's, warn against reading the story of Croesus and his sons as history; they see it as 'A Myth about Communication'.

[57] Cf. Saïd, this volume (Ch. 6, p. 121).

oured at Sparta as a hero and as the ancestor of the city's official heralds. When Darius sent heralds to Sparta demanding earth and water as tokens of submission, the Spartans threw the emissaries into a well; afterwards, their sacrificial omens kept turning out unfavourably. At last, two Spartans volunteered to be executed by Darius' successor Xerxes to atone for the wrongful deaths; they made their way to Susa, but Xerxes spared them. Nevertheless, the wrath of Talthybius worked itself out eventually, the narrator assures us, because the sons of those volunteers ended up being betrayed to and executed by Sparta's later enemies, the Athenians, many years after the attempted atonement.[58]

At the very end of the *Histories*, the wrath of another Achaean warrior is associated with the capture and execution of a Persian (9.116–20). Artayctes, whom Xerxes had put in charge of the Chersonnese, stole treasures from the hero shrine of Protesilaus, the first Greek to die at Troy, and otherwise abused the hero's sanctuary. After the Persian defeat in mainland Greece, the Athenians came to claim the Chersonnese. Artayctes tried to escape but was apprehended and brought back to the town of Sestus for execution. Herodotus reports a story told by the Chersonnesians: on the way back to Sestos, Artayctes observed the dried fish that were being heated for dinner, jumping in the pan as if alive; he exclaimed that this was a sign that Protesilaus, 'even though dead and dried', demanded vengeance from him. I have discussed this story at length elsewhere, arguing that Herodotus alludes to the story of Protesilaus in the assumption that his addressees (familiar at least with his epic identity: *Iliad* 2.695–709) will understand even more of its significance than what is spelled out in the text.[59]

These two examples of 'mythical heroes' who operate on the level of the narrative remind us again of the close relationships drawn between the Trojan and the Persian Wars. Artayctes is even said to refer to Protesilaus as 'a Greek man who invaded [Persian] territory' (9.116), repeating the idea of continuity between the invasions of Achaeans against Troy and Persians against Greece. Gregory Nagy (1987) argues that Herodotus 'subsumes' the subject matter of epic into his own magisterial account: the Trojan War becomes just an

[58] See the comments of Biraschi (1989) 119–20.
[59] See Boedeker (1988) for detailed discussion. See also Fisher, this volume (Ch. 9).

early chapter in the universal history of Europe versus Asia. This seems an accurate description of Herodotus' (self-interested) perspective on 'universal history', yet even so Homeric epic and its heroes retain a special cachet, to be shared occasionally with later events.[60]

The stories we have just considered, from their different perspectives, all illustrate that in Herodotus' text the boundary between myth and history is a permeable one. Even beyond the examples where characters are 'shared' between two discourses (such as happens with Talthybius or Protesilaus, who drop in from epic to interact with historical fifth-century characters), or where allusions seem certain (as between the birth stories of Demaratus and Heracles), narrative patterns and concerns may converge (as with Periander/Lycophron and Laius/Oedipus).

For more specific patterns, such as those we have examined in this chapter, the narratives of myth and history can well be expected to overlap, because both are generated in the same cultural climate and reflect its categories and concerns, whether psychological, social, or political. If succession of power and father-son relationships are of great concern in a culture, we should not be surprised to discover them in both mythical and historical tales—or as the Greeks would probably see it, in tales of the distant or more recent past.

Even more broadly, the narrative patterns in Herodotus, Homer, and indeed of all story-tellers may participate in a master narrative, one that Henk Versnel (wryly?) suggests can be ultimately reduced to the biological imperative 'to get'[61]—but to explore this unsurpassably reductionist possibility would take us far beyond the parameters of the *Histories*.

[60] On Herodotus' uses of Homer for political purposes, see Biraschi (1989) 114–15.

[61] Versnel (1990) 60–1, following (and going beyond) Burkert (1980) with its reliance on the narrative morphology of Propp.

CHAPTER SIX

HERODOTUS AND TRAGEDY

Suzanne Saïd

In the *Poetics* (1451b1–11), Aristotle drew a clear line between poetry and history, exemplified by Herodotus and Thucydides: poetry is more concerned with the universal, that is to say, 'what a certain type of person on a certain occasion will do or say according to probability or necessity', whereas history is more concerned with the particular and 'what Alcibiades did or had done to him' (an illustration which suggests that he had also Thucydides in mind, cf. de Ste Croix (1992) 27). Yet many critics, ancient and modern, found this opposition inadequate and emphasized the influence of the poetic tradition on Herodotus' *Histories*.

Ancient authors, from Thucydides to Themistius, paid much attention to the parallels between Herodotus, who was fond of myths,[1] and Homer,[2] but they never made a case for a 'tragic' Herodotus. The father of history is never praised, like Thucydides or Xenophon,[3] for the dramatic quality and the vividness of his narratives, which convert the listener into a spectator, as the tragedians did (Isoc. *in Nicoclem* 49). The only traces of a link between Herodotus, 'who followed Homer'[4] and Sophocles, 'the most Homeric' of the tragic poets[5] are to be found in the biographical tradition and the scholia: Plutarch (*Moralia* 785b) alludes to an epigram written by Sophocles for Herodotus and the tragic poet is said to have paraphrased the words of Solon at the beginning of the *Trachiniae* as well as at the end of the *Oedipus Rex*.

[1] Th. 1.21.1; Arist. *De generatione animalium* 756b, *Div. som.* 1.69.7; Lucianus *Philopseudes* 2; Them. *Oratio.* 33, 376c; Cic. *De legibus.* 1.1.5 and Gell. III.10.11. On Herodotus in ancient criticism, see Pernot (1995).

[2] D. H. *Ad Pompeium* 3.11 and Ps. Longin. *On Sublimity* 13.3. See also Ch. 5 in this volume.

[3] Plu. *Moralia* 347a and D. H. *On Thucydides* 15 on Thucydides; Plu. *Artaxerxes* 3.1 on Xenophon.

[4] D. H. *Ad Pompeium* 3.11: Ὁμήρου ζηλωτής.

[5] Suid. *s.v.* 'Polemon'. See also Arist. *Poetics* 1448a26; D. L. 4.20; *Vita Sophoclis* 20.

Conversely, modern scholars, starting with H. Fohl who, in 1913, wrote a dissertation entitled *Tragische Kunst bei Herodot*, are prone to associate words such as 'tragic' and 'tragedy' with various aspects of Herodotus' *Histories*.

At the most factual level, critics have compiled a list of words and phrases borrowed from tragedy.[6] For example 'the maxim of Solon . . .—that no one should call a man happy before his death—is repeated in all three tragedians', as is demonstrated by Evans.[7]

Others have stressed 'the use of comparable and often identical material' (Walbank (1960) 237) by Herodotus and tragic poets: the *Capture of Miletus*, the *Phoenician Women* of Phrynichus, the *Persians* of Aeschylus, and the much debated *Gyges* deal with historical events which are narrated also by Herodotus. Conversely, Herodotus' *Histories* contain myths,[8] as is demonstrated *inter alia* by the preface. This is no surprise, for mythical characters and events were as historical for Herodotus and his contemporaries as those belonging to 'the time of men' (that is to say those about whom Herodotus' informants have first hand information).[9] It is only later that the rhetoricians will introduce a polar opposition between 'myth' (*muthos* or *fabula*), which is neither plausible nor true, and 'history' (*historia*).[10]

Some have emphasized that Herodotus and the tragic poets used the past—either mythical or historical—in the same way, to 'shed light on contemporary political issues . . ., address some of the central political concerns of [their] audience and time' (Raaflaub (1987) 231–2) and 'give historical events and characters a paradigmatic value transcending the occasion' (Hunter (1982) 82).

Others focussed on Herodotus' debt to the literary techniques of Greek tragedy.[11] They attempted to locate the impact of tragedy on Herodotus' 'mimetic presentation', pointing out his 'dramatization of history' through speeches and conversations among historical characters as well as the vividness of his descriptions—a major component,

[6] Aly (1921) 281–6, Schmid and Staehlin (1934) 569, n. 7; Avery (1979) and Chiasson (1982) *passim*.

[7] Evans (1991) 4, who quotes *Agamemnon* 928–9; *Oedipus Rex* 1528–30 and *Andromache* 100–1.

[8] See Nesselrath (1995–6) and Ch. 5 in this volume.

[9] Wiseman (1979) 145 and Shimron (1973) *passim*.

[10] Cic. *Ad Herennium* 1.12, Quint. 2.42; S. E. *Adversus Mathematicos* 1. 263–4 etc. On ἱστορία, see Ch. 1 in this volume.

[11] Myres (1914) *passim* and (1953) 78; Egermann (1957) 38.

together with sensationalism, of the so-called 'tragic' history, according to Polybius.[12] In the last three books of his *Histories*, Herodotus is said to create 'scenes of greatest dramatic impact' (Fornara (1971a) 61), from which he separates himself carefully, allowing his audience to form their own conclusions. He 'visualizes episodes as if they formed scenes of a play' and invents 'meaningful' speeches, which, as in tragedy, 'encapsulate the meaning of an episode' (Fornara (1983) 171–2). He also reports facts in a way inspired by messenger-speeches.[13] Taking issue with Aristotle and his view of history as 'chronicle', some scholars also pointed out the existence of 'dramatic *logoi*', which use all the structural elements of a staged play[14] and 'are arranged in such a fashion as to produce a definite tragic development' (Immerwahr (1966) 69).

Most of all, critics have discovered tragic themes in the *Histories*: inescapable fate and inexorable divine forces working on characters; the tragic cycle of rise and fall (great prosperity and *olbos* 'wealth' leads to *koros* 'surfeit', *hubris* 'arrogance', which in turn blinds man to danger, causing his ultimate *atē* 'ruin'), 'the tragic perception that man is always and everywhere vulnerable to time and chance'.[15] They have also found tragic motives such as ancestral curses, ambiguous dreams and misleading oracles, fundamental incompatibility between intent and outcome, tragic reversal sometimes followed by tragic discovery, the 'tragic adviser' and tragic irony.[16]

In this paper I shall attempt to assess the true impact of tragedy on Herodotus' vision of the working of human life—an impact which has been taken for granted by too many scholars[17]—identifying as precisely as possible the borrowings of Herodotus from tragedy and their function. This is not an easy task, for the date of Herodotus' publication is still much debated: it is usually supposed to be just

[12] 'Mimetic presentation': Lateiner (1987) 106; 'dramatization of history': Waters (1966); 'tragic' history: Plb. 2.56; cf. Walbank (1938), (1955), and (1960).

[13] Immerwahr (1966) 276.

[14] Stahl (1968), Rieks (1975), Lesky (1977).

[15] 'Inescapable fate': Strasburger (1982) 887–8, Evans (1991) 33; 'tragic rise and fall': Evans (1991) 71; '*atē*': Lang (1967/8) 81; 'time and change': Gould (1989) 132.

[16] Curses, dreams, and oracles: Fornara (1971a) 90–1, Herington (1991b) 6 (see also Ch. 8, this volume); intent and outcome: Immerwahr (1954) 41, Ostwald (1991) 146; tragic discovery: Gould (1989) 76; tragic adviser: Bischoff (1932) 314–19, Lattimore (1939); tragic irony: Raaflaub (1987) 239–40.

[17] E.g., Aly (1921) 279–86, Schmid and Stachlin (1934) 569 ff., Pohlenz (1937) 16–19, 213, Fornara (1971a) 61 and (1983) 171.

prior to the production of the *Acharnians* in February 425, but Fornara ((1971b, cf. Cobet (1977)) suggested a much later date, close to 414 BC. Similarly, the date of many tragedies—as exemplified by the 'Gyges' tragedy—is much discussed. Moreover, it is sometimes hard to tell who borrows from whom, for we have many undisputed instances of Sophocles' indebtedness to Herodotus.[18] Finally, many similarities between Herodotus and the tragic poets may be explained either by their belonging to the same period or their depending on what is, after all, the acknowledged common source of tragedy and history, that is to say the Homeric epic (F. Solmsen rightly reacted against a 'tendency to discover an influence of Aeschylus and Sophocles even for ideas or motifs which are found in the epics').[19]

In order to answer these questions, I shall first point out some isolated motives, which are also prominent in early and middle Attic tragedy, excluding those also found in Homer, such as double determination. Secondly, I shall focus on 'the tragedy of Croesus' (Stahl (1968)) and the other stories of the rise and fall of barbarian kings, Greek tyrants, or Spartan leaders,[20] that have been dubbed 'dramatic' or 'tragic',[21] because 'they orchestrate many of these tragic motives into a tightly constructed narrative'. Finally, I shall compare in detail Books Seven to Nine of Herodotus with Aeschylus' *Persians*.

Tragic motives in the Histories

In the *Histories*, there are characters faced with a 'tragic choice' like that of Pelasgus in the *Suppliants* or Agamemnon or Orestes in the *Oresteia*. No doubt the best example is the wife of Intaphrenes (3.119), who has to choose among her closest kin the one she wants to spare, and decides in favor of her brother with an argument later echoed by Sophocles' *Antigone*. But in some cases the tragic issue may be

[18] See Pinto (1955), Finkelberg (1995), Zellner (1997), West (1999c).

[19] Solmsen (1959) 471–3 and (1974) 7 n. 15. See also Latte (1958) 19 and Herington (1991b) 7.

[20] It is interesting to compare the lists of tragic *logoi* given by Schmid and Staehlin (1934) 569 (Croesus, Cyrus, Periander/Lycophron, Polycrates), Myres (1953) 77 (Croesus, Cyrus, Cambyses, Polycrates, Darius, Cleomenes), Immerwahr (1966) 69–71 (Gyges, Atys, Cyrus, Periander/Lycophron, Polycrates), Strasburger (1982) (Croesus, Psammenitus, Intaphrenes), and Asheri (1988) 17 (Croesus, Cambyses, Xerxes).

[21] Dramatic: Rosenmeyer (1982) 242; tragic: Immerwahr (1966) 69.

successfully evaded, a fact which prevents the *Histories* as a whole from being tragic, as is illustrated by the story of Pactyes (1.157.2–160.1). The inhabitants of Cyme, asked by the Persians to hand over Pactyes, are initially in the same situation as the hero of Aeschylus' *Suppliants*: they have to choose between a war against a powerful adversary or the betrayal of a suppliant. What is more, they have been deceptively advised by an oracle to surrender the suppliant to his enemies. But in the end, 'unwilling either to surrender the suppliant and come to a bad end or to keep him and be besieged by the Persians' (1.160.1), they escape the dreadful consequences of this tragic choice by sending Pactyes to Mytilene.

Like Aeschylus, Herodotus sometimes pictured men who had to pay for the crimes of their ancestors,[22] as exemplified by the story of the brutal murder of Darius' envoys (7.133.1–137.1). Because of this crime, the wrath of Agamemnon's herald, Talthybius, fell upon the Spartans who 'were unable to obtain favourable signs for their sacrifices' (7.134.2). The curse was allayed for some time by the two Spartans who volunteered to offer their lives in atonement for Darius' envoys and were spared by Xerxes. But long afterwards it fell upon their sons, who were put to death by the Athenians during the Peloponnesian War, clear evidence of divine intervention, according to Herodotus (7.137.1). Yet Herodotus also stresses that the Athenians, who were as guilty as the Spartans, apparently did not suffer any harm (7.133.2), thus demonstrating that he only partially shares the Aeschylean belief.[23]

There are also traces of the tragic conception of revenge in Herodotus: the retribution exacted restores the balance by mirroring the crime even in the slightest details, as in the *Oresteia* (*Ag.* 1318–19; *Ch.* 556–7, 888, 930). The abductions in the prologue are a case in point, as is the vengeance of Hermotimus (he forced the man who castrated him to castrate all four of his sons before compelling the sons to castrate their father, Hdt. 8.105–6). But one may also point out the story of Pausanias, who is praised for his refusal to 'repay the like for the like' (*tēn homoiēn apodidous*, 9.78.3) by cutting off the head of Mardonius who, together with Xerxes, had cut off the head of Leonidas at Thermopylae.

As in the tragedies of Sophocles, there are not only isolated instances

[22] Schmid and Staehlin (1934) 569; de Ste Croix (1992) 24, (1977) 146.
[23] On Talthybius, see also Boedeker, this volume (Ch. 5).

of neglected or misunderstood oracles in the *Histories*,[24] but also narratives combining them in a tragic way, like the story of the fall of Arcesilaus of Cyrene and that of the twelve kings of Egypt. Arcesilaus was warned beforehand by the Pythia, first, if he found a kiln full of amphoras, not to fire them, and second, if he did fire the oven, not to enter the land surrounded by water (4.163). Yet he burnt alive his opponents and 'realized only after the deed was done that this was what the oracle had meant' (4.164.3). Then he kept away from Cyrene, 'because he was afraid of the oracle and thought it might be the land surrounded by water' (4.164.3), but he 'missed its meaning' (4.164.4), as became clear from his death in Barca. As for the twelve kings of Egypt, they only remembered the oracle that 'had declared that the one who should pour a libation from a bronze cup in the temple of Hephaestus would become master of all Egypt' (2.147.4) after it had been accidentally fulfilled by Psammetichus. Besides, as in *Oedipus Rex*, their very attempt to outwit the oracle by banishing Psammetichus to the marsh-country brought about the fated outcome: enraged by this outrage, Psammetichus planned his revenge and succeeded in deposing the other kings (2.151–2).

But deceptive oracles do not always have a tragic outcome in the *Histories*, as is exemplified by the story of the last Ethiopian ruler of Egypt, Sabacus. Long ago, he had been told by an oracle 'that he had to' (*hōs deoi*, 2.139.3) rule over Egypt for fifty years. When the end of that period came, he was sent a deceptive dream advising him to gather all the priests of Egypt and cut them in half. But he understood that the dream was but a way of provoking him to commit sacrilege, so that he might be harmed by either gods or men, and decided to leave Egypt 'willingly' (2.139.3).

The *Histories* also feature 'tragic warners' and 'wise advisers' such as Calchas in *Ajax* or Teiresias in *Antigone* and *Oedipus Rex*,[25] who never succeed in preventing the disaster, for example, Solon, Croesus, Amasis, and Artabanus. Their only role in the narrative of Herodotus, as in Sophocles' tragedies, is to foreshadow what is going to happen and help the reader notice the blindness of the rulers who did not pay attention to them. As in Greek tragedy (e.g., *Ag.* 468–70, *Ajax* 758–61), they also give expression to major truths of human

[24] E.g., the Eubocans 'who did not pay attention to the oracle of Bacis' (8.20.2) or the Athenians who were mistaken about the meaning of the wooden wall (8.51.5).

[25] Bischoff (1932), Lattimore (1939).

experience, that 'before his death no one can be said to be happy, but only lucky' (1.32),[26] that 'divinity is envious' (1.32.1 and 3.40.2) and 'loves to smite the great' (7.10ε).

But Herodotus introduces significant changes: his wise adviser is no longer a seer. He is 'not defined any longer by supernatural information and inspired predication . . . but by a modest assumption of probability, which is established by empirical knowledge of man's condition' (Stahl (1975) 7).

To these tragic advisers one may add the tragic seers whose ultimate archetype is Aeschylus' Cassandra. Aware that 'there is no escape' (*Ag.* 1299), she bravely enters the palace to be killed. Like her, the seer Megistias, knowing his imminent death at Thermopylae, decided to stay and 'did not find the heart to desert the Spartan leader' (7.228). But his sending back of his only son mitigates the tragedy. The story of the anonymous Persian who, on the eve of Plataea, told his fellow Theban of the defeat to come (9.16.3) and walked to his death 'with a clear knowledge of what was in store for him, entangled in the net of necessity' (9.16.3) comes closer to tragedy: the conversation of the Persian with his Greek interlocutor is modelled on the dialogue between Cassandra and the chorus in the *Agamemnon* (vv. 1296–8) and his conclusion: 'it is the worst pain for men to know much and be impotent to act' (9.16.4) precisely echoes the Aeschylean lines that underscore the bliss of ignorance and the pain of wisdom (*Supp.* 453–4; *Ag.* 1295).

In the *Histories*, as in tragedy, characters are also ironically taken at their word. The Babylonian who jeered at the Persians' unsuccessful attempt to capture Babylon and said 'you will capture our city when mules have foals' (3.151.2), offered it as something quite implausible. But it happened, and the Persian Zopyrus, now convinced that the capture of the city was fated, succeeded in devising a stratagem and sacking Babylon. In the same way, when the Spartans, urged by an oracle, demanded reparation from Xerxes for the killing of Leonidas, the king laughed at them, 'then, pointing to Mardonius, who happened to be standing by him, "they will get," he said, "all the satisfaction they deserve from Mardonius here"' (8.114.2). The death of Mardonius at Plataea (9.64) makes clear that Xerxes had unknowingly pronounced a prophetic truth.

[26] *Ag.* 929–30; *Trach.* 1–3; *OT* 1528–30; *Andr.* 100–2.

Herodotus' irony may also develop from a tacit dialogue with the audience. Like Sophocles, the historian, taking for granted a familiarity with his material and playing on the audience's knowledge as opposed to his characters' lack of foresight, builds upon this contrast. However, to identify accurately all the occurrences of this species of 'blind irony',[27] it is crucial to define correctly the knowledge and expectations of Herodotus' intended audience. If, as is postulated by Fornara and Raaflaub,[28] the *Histories* are addressed to contemporaries well aware of the fall of Themistocles, the lamentable end of Pausanias, and the 'tyranny' of Athenian imperialism (which are not directly mentioned in the *Histories*), one can see as 'magnificently ironic and tragic' (Fornara (1971a) 65) not only his portrayal of Pausanias in Book Nine, but also his picture of Themistocles and his praise of Athens' decisive contribution to saving the freedom of Greece.

To conclude, there are obviously motives borrowed from tragedy in Herodotus. Yet our examination demonstrates that they are often transformed and do not imply a tragic vision of human life for the *Histories* as a whole.

Herodotean Tragedies?

If the label 'tragic' is applied to any complete reversal of fortune which is doubly determined by human motivation and by 'what had to be' (cf. Erbse (1992) 98), it is also tempting to describe as tragedies the many narratives of the falls of rulers in the *Histories*. But at a closer look, this statement nearly always has to be qualified.

Polycrates

Let us look first at the downfall of Polycrates, tyrant of Samos, as narrated in Book Three. It is certainly possible to construe a 'tragedy of Polycrates'[29] by combining elements borrowed from a narrative split into two parts (3.39–60 and 120–5) and relying on the inter-

[27] As labelled by Rosenmeyer (1996) 504.

[28] Fornara (1971a) 59–74 and Raaflaub (1987) *passim*.

[29] Immerwahr (1966) 101, Evans (1991) 71, Chs. 13, pp. 296–7, and 23, pp. 542–8, in this volume.

pretation of the Samian Maeandrius, who says that 'Polycrates has fulfilled his allotted destiny' (3.142.3). But the chain of events leading to the death of the tyrant and his murderer is never presented as developing according to necessity or probability, as in a good tragic plot.

Indeed, there are tragic motifs. To become the only ruler of Samos, Polycrates behaves like the sons of Oedipus: he kills one of his brothers and expels the other (3.39.2). The 'miraculous' (3.42.4) reappearance of the ring which he threw into the sea in the belly of a fish brought to him by a fisherman demonstrates the gods' contrivance through a series of coincidences, as in Sophocles' *Ajax*, when Teucer points out the extraordinary relationship between the fate of Hector, dragged to death by the same belt which Ajax had given him, and Ajax, who dies by a sword which was a gift of Hector (*Ajax* 1028–37). A tragic discovery follows, but it is not the 'tragic' hero, Polycrates, who realizes the truth, but a friend of his, the Egyptian Pharaoh Amasis, who understands that 'it is impossible for one man to rescue another from what was going to happen' (3.43.1) and therefore formally renounces Polycrates' alliance, thus escaping any tragic consequences linked to the latter's downfall.

But the fall of the tyrant, which is announced by 'the warnings of his seers and the ominous dream of his daughter' (3.124.1), has no link with his crimes. For the desire of the satrap of Lydia to capture and kill Polycrates has nothing to do with any serious misdeed of the Samian tyrant and is at the end left unexplained,[30] since Herodotus leaves open the choice between two explanations which emphasize either the absurdity of the revenge or its disproportionate character (3.120.1–122.1).

The true conclusion of the story of Polycrates is the death of Oroetes, which is clearly presented as a punishment for the death of Polycrates.[31] However, among all the crimes which explain why Darius is eager to punish Oroetes—he did not oppose the Median usurpers, killed two distinguished Persians, and got rid of one of

[30] According to Herodotus, 'Oroetes had not suffered any damage or been maligned by Polycrates and did not even laid eyes on him' (3.120.1). According to Diodorus (10.16.4), Polycrates was seriously guilty, having murdered some Lydians who came to him as suppliants.

[31] Hdt. 3.126.1: 'but not long afterwards, Oroetes was overtaken by the powers that avenged Polycrates' and 3.128.5: 'that was how Oroetes the Samian was overtaken by the powers that avenged Polycrates of Samos'.

Darius' couriers (3.126.1–127.1)—there is no mention of the death of Polycrates.

So the narrative of Polycrates' fall is not to be assimilated to a true tragedy, where, according to Aristotle 'the reversal should arise from the internal structure of the plot, so that what follows should be the consequence of what happened before according to necessity or probability' (*Poetics* 1452a18–20); rather, the story of Polycrates is what is considered in the *Poetics* as the worst kind of play, that is to say 'an episodic plot, where the various episodes succeed each other without probable or necessary sequence' (*Poetics* 1451b34–5).

Demaratus, Cleomenes, and Leotychides

In Book Six, the deposition of Demaratus is to be explained by the juxtaposition of 'what had to be' (6.64.1) and human motivations, 'the grudge harboured by Cleomenes against a fellow king who spread malicious stories about him . . . out of envy and spite' (6.61.1), and the resentment felt by Leotychides towards a man who deprived him of the woman to whom he was engaged (6.65). In agreement with Cleomenes, Leotychides swore an oath against Demaratus, declaring he had no right to the throne, because he was not the son of the former king Ariston (6.65.3–4). When the Spartans decided, at his instigation, to refer the matter to Delphi, Cleomenes secured the support of one of the most influential Delphians, who persuaded the Pythia to give the appropriate answer (6.66.1–2). Later on, Leotychides became the cause of the exile of Demaratus whom he outraged publicly (6.67). In the end, Leotychides 'had to pay for what he did to Demaratus' (6.72.1), and Cleomenes also came to a bad end.

A close look at the text demonstrates, however, as in the case of Polycrates, that the misfortune of the two Spartan kings is not directly connected to what they did to Demaratus. Leotychides was banished from Sparta and his house demolished, only because he had later accepted a bribe and was caught red-handed (6.72.1–2). As for Cleomenes, he went mad and committed suicide. According to Herodotus (6.75.3), most Greeks explained his madness as a punishment for inducing the Pythia to tell lies about Demaratus' origin. But the punishment does not mirror the crime, as it does in tragedy. Moreover, this is only one among the four contradictory explanations given for the death of Cleomenes.[32]

[32] On Demaratus, see also Ch. 5, in this volume.

Cypselus and Periander

The stories of the Corinthian tyrants Cypselus and his son Periander have also been interpreted as a tragedy.[33] Vernant (1982) has drawn a convincing parallel between the Oedipus legend and the birth-story of Cypselus, which begins with an obscure oracle to be understood only later, when connected to a second one (5.92β). As in the Oedipus story, a man who has no child comes to Delphi to ask about his chances of conceiving an heir (5.92β). He receives a threatening answer, which is followed by a failed attempt to avert the disaster announced by the oracle by getting rid of the child. When the child is grown up, he goes to Delphi and as a result seizes power in his native city. But the dissimilarities are as obvious as the similarities. The child is to become a threat not to his father, but to his fellow-citizens and their rulers, the Bacchiadae; and the oracle, far from being menacing, foretells his prosperity. As a matter of fact, Cypselus, in sharp contrast to Oedipus, ruled over Corinth for more than thirty years and died at the height of his power (5.92ζ).

However, the oracle had its negative side. It announced that the Cypselids would rule over Corinth only for two generations. Viewed from this angle, the story of the feud between Periander and his son Lycophron, which was told before (3.49–53), retrospectively appears as the consequence of an ancestral curse. It is also in itself a tragedy reminiscent of the *Oresteia* or Sophocles' *Electra*. Periander has killed his wife. As a consequence, his youngest son, who has been informed about the murder by his grandfather, refuses to talk to him. Periander retaliates by turning his son out of his house and forbidding anyone to receive him or even speak to him. The son becomes destitute and, when offered by Periander to come back home, echoes the Sophoclean Electra by turning down a life of luxury and privilege in the palace with an ironic answer which is reported indirect speech. Later on, Periander attempts twice to make his peace with his son. His third attempt is about to succeed (he has agreed to leave Corinth and settle in Corcyra), when the Corcyreans murder the son to prevent the coming of the father, an ironical ending which introduces the 'too late' motif so familiar to the readers of Sophocles.

[33] See also Ch. 5, pp. 113–14, in this volume.

Astyages and Cyrus

Herodotus' account of the birth and upbringing of Cyrus, which is given a strikingly dramatic form,[34] also incorporates motifs which, 'if not directly borrowed from Athenian tragedy, at least have a cousinly relationship' (Evans (1991) 53). It is indeed a tragedy for Astyages (he is overthrown by Cyrus) and for Harpagos (his son is killed because of the very measure taken by his father to ensure his safety).

Like Laius,[35] who was warned by an oracle that his son would kill him, Astyages is sent two ominous dreams regarding his daughter's son. As a consequence, he marries his daughter to a man far below her (a reaction analogous to that of the Euripidean Aegisthus, who marries Electra to a peasant, see Erbse (1992) 34) and attempts to kill her child, who is, however, like Oedipus, saved by a herdsman. The identity of Cyrus is finally uncovered in circumstances analogous to the *anagnōrisis* of *Oedipus Rex* (by threatening the herdsman with torture), and Astyages is overthrown because of two 'tragic' mistakes (Pelling (1996) 75–6). First, he wrongly believed that the prophecy had been fulfilled, since Cyrus had become a play king. Second and worse, after punishing Harpagos, who disobeyed his orders by not killing the child himself, and serving him the flesh of his own son, a punishment which duplicates the feast of Thyestes which was also served 'under the pretence of happily celebrating a feast day' (Aesch. *Ag.* 1595), he became a victim of *atē* and, 'blinded as it were by the gods' (1.127.2), placed Harpagos in command of the army sent to fight against Cyrus. This tragic motif is developed with a typically tragic irony.[36] Astyages' speech is as ambiguous as Clytemnestra's address to Agamemnon in the *Oresteia*: 'concealing his anger' (1.118.1), he asks Harpagos to send his son to the palace, announces his intention to offer a sacrifice as a thank-offering for

[34] It includes a succession of dialogues reported in direct speech between Astyages and Harpagos (1.108.5–5), Harpagos and his wife (1.109.2–4), Harpagos and the herdsman (1.110.3), the herdsman and his wife (1.111.2–112.3), Artembares, the Persian noble whose son has been beaten up by Cyrus and Astyages (1.114.5), Cyrus and Astyages (1.115.1–3), Astyages and Artembares (1.116.2), Astyages and Harpagos (1.117.2–118.2), Astyages and the Magi (1.120.2–6), Astyages and Cyrus (1.121). On the Cyrus story, see also Boedeker (Ch. 5) and Gray (Ch. 13), this volume.

[35] On this parallel, see Evans (1991) 52.

[36] According to Burkert (1983) 108–9, 'the details of the story were probably taken from the feast of Thyestes, for we know that Herodotus was preceded by the versions in the *Alkmaionis*, Pherecydes and Aeschylus '*Agamemnon*' and may be by Euripides' *Thyestes*, which may be prior to 425, according to Erbse (1992) 33.

Cyrus' survival and invites him to the feast. Besides, the contrast between the delusion of Harpagos, who went home thinking that 'it was a great thing to have come off so lightly' (1.119.1) and his dreadful discovery that he has eaten the flesh of his son would not be out of place in a Sophoclean tragedy. The dialogue between Harpagos and Astyages, which closes the episode, suggests that Harpagos was no less deluded in his revenge: by helping Cyrus to become king and enslave the Medes, he was most foolish and most unjust, 'most foolish, because, when he might have been king himself, he gave another man the power, most unjust, because merely on account of that supper, he brought the Medes into slavery' (1.129.3). But the conclusion of the story—at least for Astyages—is not tragic: whereas Laius was killed by his son, 'Cyrus did not do Astyages any harm and kept him by his side' (1.130.3).

Herodotus' account of Cyrus' life also follows a tragic pattern. The Cyrus who overthrew Astyages and campaigned successfully against Croesus and Babylon was a wise king, aware of the instability of human life (1.86.6) and protected by the gods (1.124, 126). He is succeeded by a Cyrus who, in his campaign against the Massagetae, becomes foolish and does everything wrong.[37] He considers himself more than human and has to be reminded by Croesus that he is only a man (1.204.2; 207.2). As a result, he misunderstands the dream which predicts his own death and the accession of Darius to the throne as a manifestation of divine care for his person (1.209.1–210.1). Like Croesus before him (1.13; 1.33.1), 'he pays no attention' to admonitions (1.213.1), becomes 'overconfident' (1.212.2; cf. Marg (1965) 295–7) and 'insatiate' (1.212.2, 3) because of the magnitude of his successes, and, in the end, experiences a reversal whose completeness is manifested through echoes between the beginning of the narrative and its end.[38] In the dream of Astyages, a *vine*, growing from the genitals of his daughter and spreading over the whole of Asia, presaged Cyrus' rule over Asia. *Wine* plays a major role in his fatal campaign against the Massagetae as well. Tomyris' son was defeated by *wine* and the queen, who had sworn to make Cyrus pay for his treachery by 'satiating him with blood' (1.213.1; 214.5), cut off his head and 'put it into a *wineskin*' (1.214.4) filled with human blood.

[37] Avery (1972) 536–41 and Stahl (1975) 19–35.
[38] Immerwahr (1966) 165–7.

Cambyses

The story of Cyrus' successor, Cambyses, is divided into two parts: his madness and his crimes (3.1–38) and his punishment (3.61–6).

The first part is tragic insofar as it is a picture of a change for the worse. In the beginning, Cambyses behaved as a humane king towards the defeated Psammenitus, as did his father Cyrus towards Croesus (3.14–15; cf. Erbse (1992) 49). Then, contrary to the *nomoi* of the Persians and the Egyptians alike, he outraged and burnt the corpse of the Egyptian king Amasis (3.16.1–4). Disregarding the warning of the Ethiopian king, he launched an 'unjust' (3.21.2) campaign, which ended in disaster. He sinned against the gods and their priests,[39] committed the worst crimes against his own kin (incest and murder, 3.30–2), and outraged his most faithful servant and the noblest among the Persians (3.34–5). All these were 'the acts of a madman'.[40] Only the murder of his brother Smerdis can be assimilated to a tragic *hamartia*, since Cambyses put him to death because he misinterpreted a dream (3.30.2–3) and feared that his brother might kill him and rule.

As rightly emphasized by Erbse ((1992) 55), tragic motives come to the fore in the second part of Cambyses' story, in a narrative interrupted by dialogues and culminating in the great speech addressed to the leading Persians by their dying king. Cambyses' mortal wound, located 'in the place where he himself had stabbed the god of the Egyptians, Apis' (3.64.3), is a perfect example of tragic retribution,[41] followed by 'what from Aristotle we have learned to think of as "tragic discovery" and to associate to fifth century drama' (Gould (1989) 76). In the end, Cambyses is 'brought back to his senses' (*esōphronēse*, 3.64.5). Like Heracles in the *Trachiniae*, who understands too late the meaning of the oracles given to him (vv. 1159–61, 1164–71), he grasps only then the true meaning of previous omens. The Smerdis of his dream was not his brother but the Magus, and therefore 'the murder of his brother had been all to no purpose' (3.64.2). The Ecbatana where he was due to die according to the oracle at Buto, was not—as he thought—the Median Ecbatana: 'as

[39] He burns the oracle of Zeus Ammon (3.25.3), wounds the Apis-calf and orders the Egyptian priests to be whipped (3.29.1–2).

[40] Hdt 3.25, 30, 33, 34, 35, 37, 38, 61.

[41] Reinhardt (1940) 347, Gould (1989) 75.

it turned out the oracle meant Ecbatana of Syria' (3.64.4). And his words 'this is the place where it is assigned that Cambyses, son of Cyrus, should die' (3.64.5) echo the exclamation of Heracles in the *Trachiniae*: 'Alas, I understand in what a plight I am' (1145). Cambyses also realizes that his behaviour was wrong: he had 'acted with more haste than judgment' and 'wholly mistook what was going to be' (3.65.4). This moment of realization also involves, as in tragedy, the discovery of a general truth regarding the human condition. The hero of the *Trachiniae* understands at last that 'only the dead are spared pain' (1173); Cambyses discovers that 'it is not after all in the nature of man to avert what is going to happen' (3.65.3). The last speech of Cambyses has a tragic ring as well. His command to the Persians that they should take revenge on the Magi and 'regain their dominion 'by cunning if the Magi have won it by cunning, or by force if they have achieved their purpose by force' (3.65.6), echoes the oracle telling Orestes to hunt down the murderers of his father 'after the same fashion' (that is 'by cunning') and to 'return murder for murder' (*Choeph.* 273–4, 555–9). Last but not least, the description of Cambyses' death, which shows a king 'bitterly lamenting the cruelty of his lot' and Persians 'tearing their clothes and showing their sympathy by a great deal of crying and groaning' (3.65.6–67.1) suggests an ending similar to that of the *Persians* of Aeschylus, where the king's lament is echoed and amplified by the chorus of Persian elders.

Included in the tragedy of Cambyses is the tragedy of Prexaspes (Reinhardt (1940) 345–7). In a reverse way, it parallels the story of Harpagos, which was part of the Astyages drama. Like Harpagos, Prexaspes was 'the most trusted' (3.30.3) of the king's friends. But, as opposed to Harpagos, when Prexaspes was given the order to kill the king's brother, he remained faithful and carried out his duty. Yet, like Harpagos, he had his son killed by the king (3.35.1–4). But instead of the expected betrayal and revenge, he finally decided, after the death of Cambyses, not to side with the Magi who had taken him into their confidence, 'since he had been cruelly treated by Cambyses' (3.66.3). After agreeing to make a declaration that Smerdis was still alive, he 'revealed the true state of affairs' (3.75.2) before committing suicide.

Croesus

The comparison of these two stories within a story demonstrates on a small scale how skillfully Herodotus manipulates in different ways the motifs he borrowed from tragedy. The same conclusion is to be drawn from the analysis of the Croesus-*logos*, which is, according to most scholars, the most 'dramatic, tragic and theatrical'[42] *logos* and best demonstrates the influence of tragedy on the *Histories* (Stahl (1968)). In fact, many of the tragic motifs that are scattered in other narratives are here put together. Yet one may be reluctant to follow Myres and read the whole Lydian *logos* as 'the prose scenario for a tragic "Capture of Sardis" like the *Capture of Miletus*. . . . The sketch of the rise of the Mermnadae stands for the prologue; the scene between Croesus and Solon is the ironic counterpart to the scene between Creon and Tiresias in *Antigone*, followed by the death of Atys, as by that of Haemon . . . When Croesus is on the pyre . . . Apollo (comes) as *deus ex machina*. Between these *epeisodia* the digressions on Athens and Sparta fall into place as antistrophic stasima' (Myres (1953) 76–7). I would rather distinguish, with Lesky and Herington,[43] first, a tragedy of Gyges (1.7–13), which determines the fate of the dynasty,[44] second, a tragedy which involves Croesus, his son and a man who in the past has killed his brother unwillingly and ends with the death of the son and the suicide of his involuntary murderer (1.34–45).[45]

Like an Aeschylean tragedy, the story of Gyges involves, alongside human motivation, a supernatural strand of causation, since 'disaster had to befall Candaules' (1.8.2). The hero, Gyges, is placed twice in a 'truly tragic situation'.[46] First, he 'cannot find a way out' (1.10.1), when obliged by the king to see the queen naked in her own bedroom. Second, 'forced' (1.11.4) by the queen to choose between two roads, either to kill or to be killed, he is 'forced to become against his own will the murderer of his master' (1.11.4), a

[42] Evans (1991) 45 quotes Myres (1914), Grene (1961), Page (1962), Immerwahr (1966) 97–101. See also Chs. 9 and 13 in this volume.

[43] Lesky (1977) *passim*, Herington (1991b) 6–7.

[44] On the Gyges-tragedy, see Stahl (1968) *passim* and Rieks (1975) 32.

[45] For an analysis of the Atys-story as a tragedy, see Immerwahr (1966) 70–1, Rieks (1975) 33–7, Fornara (1983) 171–2, Erbse (1992) 16–7, Laurot (1995) 97–102. Lesky (1977) 227 is right in thinking that this does not imply a direct borrowing from an existing Atys tragedy.

[46] Snell (1973) 201; Stahl (1975) 2.

choice which will have tragic consequences for his descendants.[47] The similarities between this tragic choice and that of Aeschylean heroes faced with two equally grievous alternatives, such as Pelasgus in the *Suppliants*, Agamemnon at Aulis in the *Agamemnon*, or Orestes in the *Choephoroi*, are obvious. The circumstances of the murder also deserve attention. Gyges is supposed to attack Candaules 'starting from the very place from where he has been shown the queen naked' (1.11.5). In the same way, Sophocles made clear in his *Electra* that Aegisthus would die at the place where he killed Agamemnon (*El.* 1495–6).

According to a definition of responsibility which is objective and collective, as in the tragedy of Aeschylus (see Saïd (1978) 265–6), this murder, though committed under compulsion, by a man who 'followed a woman's treacherous instructions' (1.9.1), as acknowledged by Apollo himself, is nevertheless a crime, since Gyges 'has killed his master and held his office, to which he had no claim' (1.91.1). It calls for a revenge, which will come in the fifth generation: Croesus will pay for the crime of Gyges (1.13.2, 91.1). Similarly in the *Seven against Thebes* (743–52), the third generation, that is, the two sons of Oedipus, had to atone for the sin of Laius, who, overcome in the same way by the will of a woman, disobeyed the order of Apollo and begot a son.

The transformation of Gyges into a tragic hero seems to be due to Herodotus, as demonstrated by a comparison with the two other extant versions of Gyges' usurpation, handed down by Plato (*Rep.* 359c6–360b2) and Xanthus (*FGrHist* 90, 44 11–47). In the *Republic*, Gyges is a lucky shepherd, who cannot resist the temptation to get hold of the throne without risk: having discovered by chance a golden ring which makes him invisible, he becomes the lover of the queen and, together with her, kills the king and seizes the throne of Lydia. In the *Ludiaka*, Gyges kills the king to escape death, because he has fallen in love with Candaules' wife who has told her husband about Gyges' betrayal.

The publication by Lobel of a papyrus fragment preserving parts of the speech in which the wife of Candaules tells of Gyges' visit to her bedroom has opened new possibilities for the interpretation of the Herodotean account. With the exception of Lloyd-Jones (1952),

[47] Pohlenz (1937) 61, Stahl (1968) 393.

who suggests a different possibility ('the fragment would be a part of an *iambus* of Archilochus, deliberately or accidentally translated into the Attic dialect') without, however, absolutely ruling out the possibility that it is a fragment of a tragedy, all the scholars who have written on the fragment have unanimously assigned it to a tragedy. But relying on arguments from the metre and the vocabulary, they have reached widely different conclusions regarding the date of the play and its relation to the *Histories*.

For some scholars (Lobel, Page, Cataudella, and Snell),[48] this is an early tragedy, anterior to Herodotus and to be attributed either to Phrynichus, Ion of Chios, or, more vaguely, a pupil of Aeschylus. According to the majority,[49] it is a Hellenistic tragedy. It is therefore possible to suppose either that the play depended on Herodotus or that it is the source of the Herodotean account (given that we have only sixteen lines from this play, it is difficult—to say the least—to assess its impact on Herodotus; besides, the example of Aeschylus' *Persians*' impact on the last books of the *Histories*—on which more will be said below—seems to exclude *a priori* the possibility of major borrowings).[50] As far as I am concerned, I would rather share the scepticism of Raubitschek (1955) and Holzberg (1973), who, after a careful examination of all the arguments *pro* and *contra*, leave open the question of the date.

The second tragedy (1.34–45) is much closer to Sophocles. Right from the beginning, Herodotus alludes to a predetermined fate: 'the righteous anger of a god (*nemesis*) took hold of Croesus because he thought himself the most blessed of men' (1.34.1). Yet he carefully presents this interpretation as a mere guess (*hōs eikasai*, 1.34.1). The episode follows immediately after Croesus' conversation with Solon (1.30–3), which makes clear that the king is unable to pay attention to the warning of a wise man, whom he wrongly abuses as a fool, a tragic irony which Stahl accurately equates with the insults hurled

[48] Lobel (1950), Page (1950), (1951), (1962), Cataudella (1957), Snell (1973). Relying on the fragments of a hydria from Corinth published by Beazley in *Hesperia* 25 (1955) 305–19 and dated in all probability between 470 and 460 or 450, which represents Croesus on his pyre, but also a Greek youth playing the flute (which suggests an actual scene of a tragedy), and combining it with the evidence of the papyri, Page suggests that there existed a trilogy on the fall of the royal house of Lydia in the first half of the fifth century.

[49] Latte (1950), Maas (1950), Galiano (1950/1), Kakridis (1951), Cantarella (1952), Gigante (1952), Lesky (1953), Bickel (1957), Kassel (1974), Erbse (1992) 4–5.

[50] This is the conclusion reached by Lesky (1977), Evans (1985), and Erbse (1992) 5.

by the Sophoclean Oedipus at the seer Teiresias.[51] In fact, there are many more echoes between *Oedipus Rex* and the tragedy of Croesus. Like Oedipus, Croesus, warned by the gods of a disaster to come, does his best to prevent the fatal outcome: told by an oracular dream that one of his sons was to die struck by an iron weapon (1.34), 'he got him a wife, saw to it that he no longer took the field with the Lydian soldiers whom he used to command. He also removed all the weapons, javelins, spears and so on from the men's rooms' (1.34.3). When persuaded by his son to send him to a hunt, he again took every precaution by asking Adrastus, whom earlier he had received as a friend and ritually purified of a murder, to pay back his obligation by 'watching over'[52] his son. Nevertheless, his son is—ironically—killed by the spear of the very man whom his father has appointed to watch over him.

Besides, Atys, like Oedipus, plays an active part in the decision which ultimately causes his death: he is the one who convinces a reluctant Croesus to allow him to participate in the hunt, by demonstrating to him that the dream does not say anything about a boar's tusk.

Last but not least, there is Adrastus, who accidentally becomes a murderer and commits suicide, like the heroine of Sophocles' *Trachiniae*. He first kills his brother 'unwillingly' (1.35.3). Then, also by accident (his spear misses the boar and hits Croesus' son) and during a hunt in which he becomes involved against his wishes (1.42.1) he kills his benefactor's son. Forgiven by Croesus, who 'pities him' and agrees that 'he was not guilty of this crime' (1.45)—as does Hyllus in the *Trachiniae*, when he finds out the truth about his mother (*Trach.* 934–5, 1134–42)—, he kills himself (see Saïd (1978) 267–8).

The way in which these two narratives are organized is also reminiscent of tragedy, as many scholars from Myres to Laurot have pointed out.[53] More precisely, they have underlined 'the masterly interweaving of direct and indirect speech'[54] in these two episodes, which both, like an Attic tragedy, stage three characters—Candaules, his wife, and Gyges, and Croesus, Atys, and Adrastus.

[51] Stahl (1975) 6 quotes *OR* 375; see also *OR* 433–6.

[52] Hdt. 1.41 φύλακον; 42 · φυλάσσειν. . . . τοῦ φυλάσσοντος.

[53] See Myres (1953) 76–8, Immerwahr (1966) 70–1, Stahl (1968) *passim*, Rieks (1975) *passim*, Lesky (1977) 225, Fornara (1983) 171–2, Evans (1991b) 45–7, Herington (1991) 6, Laurot (1995) *passim*.

[54] Gould (1989) 54 and Stahl (1975) 4.

In the major part of the Croesus *logos* (1.46–92), the formal similarities with tragedy are less obvious. As opposed to the tragic action, which occupies only a short span of time, the events which take place extend over a long period. Besides, there are only two dialogues between Cyrus and Croesus at the very end of the narrative. Yet, the same tragic combination of supernatural causation and human motivation is to be found there. The fall of Croesus and the capture of Sardis, which have been repeatedly announced by a portent (1.78.1), and a series of oracles given right at the beginning of the expedition (1.46–58) or even long before it (1.84, 85; see Stahl (1975) 10–11), demonstrate that 'it is impossible even for a god to escape the lot assigned' (1.91.1), an idea which is not specific to Attic tragedy and may well be found in the *Iliad*. But there is at least one detail which may be a direct borrowing from tragedy. In her answer to the complaint of Croesus, the Pythia alludes to a partially successful bargaining by Apollo: 'unable to divert the *Moirai* from their course' (1.91), the god nevertheless gained for Croesus three extra years of prosperity. One is reminded of Aeschylus' *Eumenides*,[55] where the Erinyes reproach Apollo for beguiling the *Moirai* in order to help Admetus. But some responsibility is also laid on man. In reaction to Croesus, who after his fall accused his evil *daimōn* and the god of the Greeks of having 'encouraged' him to campaign against Cyrus by means of 'deceptive' oracles (1.87.3; 90.2), the Pythia points out the mistake of the king, who did not 'understand' the meaning of the two oracles given to him by Delphi (1.91.4, 5)—an interpretation finally accepted by Croesus (1.91.6) and confirmed by a narrative which describes Croesus as deluded by 'hope' (1.54.1; 56.1; 71.1; 75.1; 77.4), 'trusting . . . ambiguous oracles', whose meaning he 'misses' (1.71.1: *hamartōn tou khrēsmou*; 73.1; 75.2), and unable to listen to the advice given to him by the 'wise' Sandanis (1.71.2–4).[56]

But the conclusion of the story, as Herodotus chooses to tell it,[57] is not tragic,[58] since Croesus escapes death (he is miraculously rescued by Apollo) and, after learning wisdom through suffering,[59]

[55] 723–8. Cf. Rieks (1975) 31.

[56] On the blindness of Croesus during the campaign against Cyrus, see Marg (1965) 292–3 and Stahl (1975) 8–10.

[57] On the other versions of the fate of Croesus after the sack of Sardis, see Burkert (1985) *passim*.

[58] Evans (1991) 48 points out that 'the fall of Croesus is a qualified one'.

[59] Hdt. 1.207.1. On the limits of this wisdom, see Stahl (1975) 19–36.

assumes towards Cyrus and later towards his son Cambyses[60] the role played by Solon in his own life.[61] Besides, one has to note that the tragedy of Croesus is but one side of the coin. The other is the success story of Cyrus, a success that is not to be explained only by 'the good luck' (1.87.5) of the Persian king, but also by careful planning, clever stratagems and accurate observation (1.79.1; 80.4; 84.4).

Herodotus' Histories *and Aeschylus'* Persians[62]

Herodotus knew and used Aeschylus' *Persians*, as is demonstrated by a series of verbal echoes particularly in reported or direct speeches.[63] For instance, as Broadhead, and How and Wells have pointed out in their commentaries,[64] Artabanus in the *Histories*, as well as Atossa in the *Persians*, portrays a king led astray by his 'consort with bad men'.[65] What is more, the prophecy of Bacis quoted approvingly by Herodotus (8.77) and the speech delivered by Themistocles after Salamis (8.109.2–5) interpret Xerxes' defeat in the same way as Aeschylus. Like Darius in the *Persians*, the oracle, after emphasizing the 'madness' of the aggressor, attributes the Persian setback to 'divine *Dike*', which quenches *Koros*, the son of *Hubris*. When Themistocles says:

> Indeed we did not do it. It was God and heroes, who were jealous that one man in his godless pride should be king of Asia and of Europe too—a man who is impious and reckless, who burns and destroys the statues of the gods and dared to lash the sea with whips and bind it with fetters (8.109.3)

he precisely echoes the words of the Aeschylean Darius (*Pers.* 745–8, 809–12). But what in the *Persians* was the final message of the play has become a mere argument in the *Histories*. For this grand speech serves a very personal purpose. As Herodotus says (8.109.5), Themistocles wanted to prevent the Athenians from pursuing the

[60] Hdt. 1.155–6: advises Cyrus to spare the Lydians and punish only Pactyes and his followers; 207: advises Cyrus to cross the river and fight the Massagetae on their own territory by tricking them (two examples of advice followed by Cyrus: 1.208, 211); when he accompanies Cambyses in his expedition against Egypt, he warns him against reckless behaviour (3.36).

[61] Marg (1965) 294, Stahl (1975) 13–4, 20.

[62] See also Ch. 24 in this volume.

[63] Immerwahr (1954) 28, Herington (1991b) 6.

[64] Broadhead (1960) *ad Pers.* 753–5 and How and Wells (1928) *ad* Hdt. 7.16.

[65] *Persians* 753: κακοῖς ὁμιλῶν ἀνδράσιν, Hdt. 7.16 α: ἀνθρώπων κακῶν ὁμιλίαι.

Persians, thus laying the foundation for a future claim upon Xerxes, if he happened to get into trouble with the Athenians.

Besides, a close examination of these correspondences suggests that Herodotus more often than not displaced, adapted or even significantly altered the meaning of the phrases he borrowed. His description of the grief of the Persians tearing their clothes, weeping and wailing (9.99.2), which is clearly derived from the end of the *Persians*, does not take place after the king's arrival, but before it. In the *Histories*, it is Xerxes who tells the leading Persians that he has been thinking how not to fall short of his predecessors and how to add as much power as they did to the Persian empire, while in the *Persians* he was blamed for not increasing the possessions inherited from his father (Hdt. 7.8; *Pers.* 754–6). When Artabanus, now in favour of the expedition, tells Xerxes to do his best to help the god who offers him such an opportunity, he ironically echoes the lesson drawn by Darius from the failure of Xerxes: 'when a man is striving, god assists him' (Hdt. 7.18; *Pers.* 742). Yet, the best illustration of the gap between Herodotus and Aeschylus is their opposite use of the famous sentence 'Remember Athens'. In the *Histories* (5.105; 6.94), Darius orders a slave to remind him of the Athenians, in order to take his revenge on them for the sack of Sardis; in the *Persians*, he asked the chorus to remember the Athenians and their victory to prevent them from sending another expedition (vv. 823–6).

Such differences may warn the reader against overestimating the influence of the *Persians* on the narrative of Herodotus. A close reading of Books Seven to Nine shows in fact, besides similarities, great discrepancies between the two interpretations of the second Persian War.

Given that the tragic poet and the historian both wanted to picture a major reversal of fortune,[66] they contrasted sharply the beginning and the end of the expedition. Like the prologue and the parodos of the *Persians*, Herodotus' two descriptions of the Persian army, the catalogue of the troops and the calculation of their number before the first major battles of the war in Book Seven,[67] provide a spectacular display of the power of Xerxes, which only serves to bring out better the magnitude of his disaster. The exodos of the *Persians*, with the appearance of a king in rags and without men

[66] On the reversal in the *Persians*, see Saïd (1988).
[67] Hdt. 7.41–2, 54–5, 60–99, 184–6 and *Persians* 16–59, 65–87.

escorting him, is matched by the account of his arrival at the Hellespont 'with hardly a fraction of his army' (8.115.1).

In the *Histories* as in the *Persians*, the ill-fated outcome of the war is announced by a series of signs sent by the gods. The dream of Atossa, the omen of the eagle and the hawk which follows it, and the oracle given in the past to Darius and alluded to in his dialogue with Atossa (176–211, 739–41) are paralleled in the *Histories* not only by the words of the wise Artabanus, who predicts the disaster right at the beginning of the expedition, but also by a string of dreams, oracles, and portents.[68] But these divine signs are sometimes used by Herodotus in a way which is more like Sophocles than like Aeschylus. Whereas in the *Persians* the queen and the chorus were well aware of their threatening character (v. 211), in the *Histories* they are either misinterpreted by the Magi as foreshadowing a catastrophe for the Greeks[69] or neglected by Xerxes (7.58.1).

According to Herodotus and Aeschylus alike, the expedition was doomed to fail right from the start, because it was a manifestation of *hubris* (*Pers.* 808, 821; Hdt. 7.16α2; 8. 77.1). Both writers see the conquest of Greece as the first step towards an universal empire: the parodos of the *Persians*, which pictures a king leading his troops 'against the whole world' (74), is echoed in the *Histories* by the first speech of Xerxes, who plans to make the Persian empire 'coterminous with Zeus' heaven' (7.8γ2).[70] Both agree that Xerxes violated a natural order guaranteed by the gods by bringing together two lands, Europe and Asia, which were intended to remain separate, and by enslaving people who by nature are free. In Aeschylus, the parallelism of these two attempts is made manifest in the emphasis laid on the 'bridging' (in Greek 'yoking': vv. 72, 722) of the Bosphorus, which is powerful and assimilated to a god (723, 746), by means of 'fetters' (745, 747), and the recurrent simile of the yoke of slavery (50, 191, 196, 594). What is more, the dream of Atossa (181–99) clearly brings together the two themes of uniting and enslaving (the two women who were allotted two separate domains, the Greek land

[68] The prophecies announcing a failure which are omitted by Onomacritus: 7.6; the third dream of Xerxes: 7.19.1; the eclipse of the sun when the army leaves Sardis: 7.37; the two portents which occur at Sardis and after the crossing of the Hellespont: 7.57–8. On the dreams, see also below, p. 144.

[69] Hdt. 7.19: the third dream of Xerxes and 37.3 the eclipse.

[70] See also 7.53.2 (Xerxes) and 7.209.4 (Demaratus).

and that of the barbarians, are put under the same yoke). Similarly, Herodotus pictures a Xerxes who transgresses natural boundaries, not only by bridging the Bosphorus and linking the two continents,[71] but also by cutting a canal through Athos (7.22.1–24.2). This turning land into sea is another way of interfering with nature, as is demonstrated by the oracle warning the Cnidians against digging a canal and transforming a peninsula into an island (1.174.3–6). Like Aeschylus, Herodotus also suggests a correspondence between the bridge ('yoke') over the Bosphorus and the 'yoke' of servitude in the first speech of Xerxes (7.8β1, δ1). Moreover, after the first bridge was destroyed by a storm, he pictures a king commanding that a pair of 'fetters' (7.35.1) be thrown into the sea, but, in contrast to Aeschylus, he suggests that Xerxes may later have repented (7.54.3).

The Persians were also guilty of sacking and burning the temples of the Greek gods. Their impiety, which was vigorously condemned by the Aeschylean Darius (*Persians* 809–12), is illustrated on several occasions in the *Histories*.[72] But it is mitigated by Herodotus' allusion to Xerxes' possible remorse after the burning of the Acropolis (8.54) and his reminder that this fire was set in retaliation for the burning of the temple of Cybele by the Greeks during the sack of Sardis (5.102.1).

As a consequence, the defeat of the Persians is explained in a slightly different way by the tragic poet, who stresses the role of the gods, and the historian, who puts more emphasis on the part played by natural forces in the Persian defeat.[73]

According to Aeschylus, the *hubris* of Xerxes and his sins brought on a downfall which has to be explained by a supernatural intervention either by a just Zeus, as suggested by Darius (739–40, 827–88), who is the mouthpiece of the poet, or by an envious and deceitful god, as suggested by the messenger (353–4, 454–5, 495–7, 513–14), the queen (472–3), the chorus (515–16, 532–4) and Xerxes himself (909–12). Herodotus' attitude is more complex. Like Aeschylus, he may sometimes take for granted a direct intervention of the divinity: the wrecking of the Persian fleet sailing round Euboea is to be

[71] Hdt. 7.8β1; 10β1; 33; 34; 36; 8.20.2; 9.120.4.

[72] Hdt. 8.32.2, 33.1: the burning and pillaging of the temples in Phocis; 35.1–2: the attempt to plunder Apollo's temple at Delphi; 8.53.2: their stripping the temple of its treasures and burning everything on the Acropolis.

[73] For a different view, see Ch. 8, pp. 193–4, in this volume.

explained by a 'god' who was doing everything to make the Persian fleet equal to the Greek and prevent it from being much superior (8.13)—an explanation which may answer the words of the messenger, who explained the defeat of the Persians at Salamis as due to a god who tipped the scales against the Persians by allocating them an unequal share of luck (*Persians* 345–7). But Herodotus usually qualifies this type of explanation and distances himself from it, by placing it into a speech or by putting it in quotation marks with formulas such as 'it is said' or 'X said', as in the case of the storm at cape Sepias, the intervention of the two giant warriors who routed the Persians at Delphi, the miracle of Thria, or the appearance before Salamis of a phantom in the shape of a woman.[74] It is only for minor incidents—the drowning of the Persians at Pallene or the fact that they did not enter the shrine of Demeter at Plataea—that Herodotus accepts or even suggests himself a supernatural explanation (8.129.3; 9.65.2).

On the contrary, he often draws attention to the decisive intervention of natural forces. This theme was already adumbrated in the *Persians*. According to Darius, who, like Artabanus in the *Histories*, often speaks on behalf of the author, the land itself is the ally of the Greeks, by killing through starvation the mass of the Persians (792–4), a truth already demonstrated in the play by the description of the Persian retreat by the messenger (488–91). Artabanus goes further. He tells Xerxes that the land and the sea 'the two mightiest powers in the world are his worst enemies': the sea, because 'there is not a harbour anywhere big enough to receive your fleet' and the land, because it will not produce enough food for such a large army and 'will starve you' (7.49.2–5). The narrative amply validates these predictions. Herodotus alludes to the ruin of those who had to entertain the Persians (7.118). He mentions rivers which failed to provide enough water for their needs (7.127.2; 187.1). He describes how the troops of Xerxes, during their retreat after Salamis, had to 'eat grass where they found no grain and strip the barks and leaves of trees of all sorts cultivated and wild because of hunger' (8.115.2). He tells how many among the men of Artabazus after Plataea 'succumbed to hunger and exhaustion' (9.89.4). He also pictures their ships wrecked by the storms because there was not enough room on the short stretch of beach (7.188.1–3).

[74] Hdt. 7.189.1, 189.3; 8.38, 39.1, 65.1, 84.2.

Until now, we have only pointed out changes of emphasis from Aeschylus to Herodotus. Turning to the presentation of Xerxes' decision and the analysis of the causes of the second Persian War which it supposes, we shall see major discrepancies of form as well as of content between the *Persians* and the *Histories*.

First the form. Whereas the two sets of causation, human and supernatural, are closely entwined in the *Persians*, Herodotus keeps them apart. The human motives are expressed in the reported speech of Mardonius and the speeches delivered during the council of the leading Persians which follows (7.5–11); the supernatural visitations, put in quotation marks by the formula 'as it is said by the Persians' (7.12.1), occur in the dreams which follow and play a decisive role in Xerxes' decision (7.12–18).

Second the content. In the tragedy of Aeschylus, the decision of Xerxes to take 'revenge'(vv. 473–5) on Athens for the defeat of Marathon is consistently presented as the consequence of a passionate desire of the king (233: ἵμειρ', 826: ἄλλων ἐρασθείς), which betrays his ignorance,[75] his lack of understanding,[76] or even his madness (719: ἐμὼρανεν), a 'disease' which is sometimes explained by his temper (he is young (13, 744, 782) and rash (718, 754: θούριος)), by the intervention of bad advisers (753–8), or a deception sent by the gods (93, 472, 831). As is demonstrated by the long speech where Darius rewrites Persian history (765–81), this decision is totally at odds with the policy of Xerxes' predecessors, beginning with Medus, the eponymous hero of the Medes, and Cyrus, the founder of the Persian empire. With the exception of the usurper Mardus, they knew how to 'control their passions' (767) and had a 'sound mind' (772). Therefore, they were beloved by the gods and successful (768, 772). The Aeschylean Cyrus in particular was a wise ruler who limited his conquests to Lydia, Phrygia, and Ionia (770–1), that is, to Asian territories included in the domain allotted to the barbarians by the gods (186–7). The Aeschylean Xerxes is also totally opposed to a father whose advice he has forgotten (783). For the Aeschylean Darius is a king who did not transgress the limitations assigned to the Persian

[75] *Persians* 361: οὐ ξυνεὶς, δόλον 373: οὐ γὰρ τὸ μέλλον ἐκ θεῶν ἠπίστατο., 454: κακῶς τὸ μέλλον ἱστορῶν., 744: τάδ' οὐ κατειδώς.

[76] *Persians* 552: δυσφρόνως 725: μὴ φρονεῖν καλῶς, 749: οὐκ εὐβουλίᾳ, 829: σωφρονεῖν κεχρημένον.

empire by the gods (he never crossed the river Halys)[77] and never did any harm to the Persians.[78]

On the contrary, the Herodotean Xerxes, at the beginning of Book Seven, did not possess any great wish to invade Greece. It is only those around him, Mardonius and the Peisistratidae, as well as the Aleuadae in Thessaly, who were anxious to campaign.[79] Among the arguments put forward privately as well as publicly by Mardonius and repeated by Xerxes, the only one which may be an echo of Aeschylus is revenge.[80] But it is less a cause than a pretext, as is said not only by the Greek envoys to Gelon (7.157.2), but by Herodotus himself (7.138.1).

The two political arguments that appear in the two speeches of Xerxes and seem to influence his decision are absent from the *Persians*. This is no surprise, for the first one, that Greece has to be conquered because it is a fertile country (7.8.α2), turns on its head the commonplace contrast between Greek poverty (7.102.1) and Persian wealth, and the second one (7.11.2), which presents the expedition as a 'pre-emptive strike' (Evans (1991) 14) and introduces the idea of a struggle for survival and the 'them or us' attitude, 'clearly points to the period around the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War' (Raaflaub (1987) 228).

Moreover, the argument which carries the day and appears in the first speech of Xerxes as well as in the dreams which are sent first to Xerxes and then to Artabanus, the iron law of imperialist expansionism, is foreign to Aeschylus. In Book Seven, Xerxes opens his speech by saying that by launching a campaign against Greece, he is not establishing a new *nomos*, but is only following the one he inherited from his predecessors: 'I learn from our elders that we have never remained inactive (*oudama kō etremisamen*), since we took the sovereign power from the Medes, when Cyrus deposed Astyages.' (7.8α1).

At Abydus, before the crossing of the Bosporus, he again praises the undertakings of his predecessors: 'It was by taking risks that my

[77] *Persians* 864–6. In the *Histories* (1.72) the Halys is a boundary between the Persian and the Lydian dominions, but in Isocrates (*Areopagiticus* 80 and *Panathenaicus* 59), it is presented as a limit which has not to be transgressed by the Persian land forces.

[78] *Persians* 555 ἀβλαβής and 663, 671 ἄκακος, 855 ἀκάκας.

[79] Hdt. 7.6: ἐπιθυμητὴς, προθυμίη, προσωρέγοντο.

[80] Hdt. 7.5.3; 8.α2,β1,2; 9α1; 11.2,3: 7 occurrences of τιμωρός, τιμωρίη, τιμωρέειν.

ancestors brought us to where we stand today. Only by great risks can great results be achieved. We are therefore acting like them . . .' (7.50.3). According to Xerxes, this *nomos* is sanctioned by heaven: 'It is a god who leads us on this way' (7.8α1). This is also demonstrated by the dreams which follow and play a decisive role in the final decision (cf. Saïd (1981) 22–5). The god who appears there and represents, like the god alluded to by Xerxes, the genius of the Persians, also expresses the 'inevitability' (7.17. 2: *to khreon genesthai*) of the campaign (7.17.2). As opposed to the god of Agamemnon's dream in Book Two of the *Iliad*—a dream with which Xerxes' dream has been too quickly identified (e.g., Regenbogen (1930b) 98–9)—, he is not deceitful.[81] In the *Iliad*, the Dream was plainly lying when telling Agamemnon that the time had come to sack the city and that the Trojans were doomed (2.11–15, 28–33 = 65–70). But in the *Histories* the god does not say that Xerxes will be victorious, only that he is wrong to change his mind (7.12.2), and he warns him of the consequences: 'just as in a moment you rose to greatness and power, so in a moment you will be brought low again' (7. 14), for it is dangerous for a young king, who has just come to power, to show some weakness by changing his mind. It is only Artabanus who interprets this divine impulse as a promise of disaster: 'since it is God's will and since apparently (*hōs eoike*) heaven itself is about to send ruin upon Greece' (7.18.3) and the 'apparently' emphasizes the subjective character of this interpretation (Köhnken (1988) 28).

It is tempting to oppose this *daimōn*, who embodies the character of the Persians, to their *moira*, as it is defined in Aeschylus' *Persians*. In the tragedy, the *moira*, assigned to the Persians from old by the gods, commanded them to fight land battles only, besieging cities and using their cavalry, thus preventing them from overstepping the boundaries between Europe and Asia and limiting their empire to Asia (*Persians* 94–9). On the contrary, in the *Histories*, the 'god' leads the Persians to extend their empire indefinitely.

The Persians' drive to ever increase their conquests goes back to Cyrus, the founder of the Persian empire. This restlessness is perceived, right at the beginning of the *Histories*, by the queen of Babylon and her subjects (1.185.1: *ouk atremizousan*; 190.2: *ouk atremizonta*). And

[81] As Evans (1991) 15 rightly points out, 'though Herodotus has borrowed from Homer the literary device, he has shifted the emphasis'. For the dreams, see also Ch. 5, p. 103, and Ch. 9, pp. 221–3, in this volume.

the continuity of Persian imperialism is brought out not only by the speeches of Artabanus who, at the beginning of Book Seven, compares the projected campaign against Greece with the expedition of Darius against the Scythians (7.10α2–3, γ1–2; 18.2) and other disastrous expeditions of his predecessors, such as the campaign against the Massagetae of Cyrus and the campaign against the Ethiopians of Cambyses (7.18.2), but also by the narrative of Herodotus. For Cyrus never stopped enlarging his empire: after 'subduing' Croesus (1.130.3), 'enslaving' the Ionians (1.161, 169.2), 'laying waste' all the cities of Asia Minor (1.177) and 'conquering' Babylon (1.201.1), 'he desired to have the Massagetae in his power' (1.201.1) and was only stopped in his conquests by death. His son and successor Cambyses was even more eager to enlarge the empire: after his campaign against Egypt, he wanted to attack the Carthaginians, the Ammonians and the long-lived Ethiopians (3.17.1), and it was only the lack of provisions and the threat of cannibalism which put an end to this expedition. Last but not least, Darius in the *Histories*, far from being a wise king and the polar opposite of his son, is similar to him. It would be easy to demonstrate—and it has already been done by many scholars for the Scythian expedition[82]—that Herodotus' narrative draws many parallels between the campaign of Xerxes, the Scythian expedition, and the first Persian War.

Viewed from this angle, the campaign of Xerxes is no longer an accident caused by the rashness of a young king, as it was in the *Persians*. It becomes the logical outcome of the unlimited expansionism which characterized the rulers of Asia right from the beginning.[83] The tragedy of Xerxes has been replaced by the tragedy of Persian imperialism, which may be read as a warning addressed by Herodotus to the contemporary representatives of imperialism, that is the Athenians.[84]

[82] Evans (1991) 18 n. 34 mentions Bornitz (1968) 125–30, Wood (1972) 94–100, Hunter (1982) 206–25; Hartog (1988) 34–60. See also Saïd (1981) 25–7.

[83] Fornara (1971a) 29 rightly points out that 'this theme becomes prominent and central' only in 7–9.

[84] Moles (1996) and Ch. 2 of this volume.

Conclusion

Clearly, tragedy should be numbered among the literary influences on Herodotus. If we look for direct borrowings in the *Histories*, we have to conclude, with Evans ((1991) 5), that 'it seems that Herodotus borrowed tragic elements when it suited his dramatic purposes, but they were literary devices designed to catch his audience; they did not inform his historical vision'. But if we pose the question thus: Is Herodotus, like Thucydides, a 'tragic historian' (MacLeod (1983) 157)? Is there 'a tragic view of history' (Fornara (1971a) 78) in Herodotus? it becomes difficult to give a simple answer.

If we label as tragic a narrative which demonstrates the limitations and instability of human conditions (Stahl (1975) 1), we may say that the *Histories*, like Homeric epic, are a case in point. In the world of Herodotus, as in the allegory of the jars in Book 24 of the *Iliad*, there is no perfect happiness and complete self sufficiency: 'no man is able to lay his hands on everything any more than a country can produce everything it needs' (1.32.8). The concept of divine jealousy, which prevents living beings from growing excessively, a concept endorsed by many Herodotean characters,[85] is but a translation of the same idea into religious terms. This truth is exemplified not only by the destinies of great kings and rulers, but also by anecdotes concerning ordinary individuals such as a certain Ameinocles: the tempest that destroyed four hundred ships in the neighbourhood of Sepias 'made him a very rich man', but Herodotus adds: 'but in other respects he proved less fortunate.For he met with a distressing disaster in the form of the murder of his son' (7.190).

An even greater emphasis is put on the theme of human instability in the *Histories*. As Herodotus himself says in the prologue, 'human prosperity never abides long in the same place' (1.5.4).[86] This also holds good in the case of power: 'most of the cities which were great once are small today and those which used to be small were great in my own times' (1.5.4). It is also valid for virtue. Before Plataea, the Athenians acknowledged in their speech that 'the very men who once were brave and helpful could today be cowards, and yesterday's cowards might be today's heroes' (9.27.4), a truth which

[85] Hdt. 1.32.1: Solon; 3.40.2: Amasis; 7.10ε1, 46.4: Artabanus; 8.109.3: Themistocles.

[86] This is echoed by Solon (Hdt. 1.32.4), Croesus (1.207.2), and Artabanus (7.4).

is illustrated in the *Histories* by the parallel transformations of Croesus, the fool who becomes wise, and Cyrus, the wise man who becomes a fool.

It is precisely this pervasive instability which prevents the Herodotean world from being 'tragic', if tragedy implies the belief in an iron law of history. Each fall of a ruler is balanced by the rise of another and all disasters have a bright side. What prevents Herodotus' *Histories* from being as tragic as Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian war* is perhaps the impartiality[87] and the Panhellenic perspective (Fornara (1971a) 90) of the father of history, as opposed to the Thucydidean focus on Athens and the decline and fall of its empire. Therefore I propose, as a paradoxical conclusion of a paper devoted to 'Herodotus and Tragedy' that Cornford ((1907) 137–9) was right, after all, in opposing nearly a hundred years ago, an epic Herodotus to a tragic Thucydides.

[87] Gomme (1954) 110–2 and Strasburger (1955) 579–80.

CHAPTER SEVEN

PHILOSOPHY, SCIENCE, POLITICS: HERODOTUS AND THE INTELLECTUAL TRENDS OF HIS TIME

Kurt A. Raaflaub

The Greeks go about things in the wrong way. (Mardonius, 7.9β.2)

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is threefold: to survey the many ways in which Herodotus shares in contemporary intellectual trends, that is, in ideas and theories developed by philosophers, sophists, and 'scientists' before and in his time; to discuss his contribution to the advancement of historical and political thought; and to explore the thesis that, despite major differences, Herodotus in many respects is much closer to Thucydides than scholars usually allow.[1] I thus begin, paradoxically, with Thucydides, an Athenian who spent twenty years in exile (4.104–8; 5.26.5), presumably returned to Athens after the end of the Peloponnesian War, and most likely died in the mid-390s. From the beginning of the war he collected material for a history (1.1; 5.26) and probably composed drafts of a narrative; large parts, however, must have been written or revised after the war.[2] Thucydides thus traced and tried to understand one great war at

[1] Translations (often with slight modifications): Waterfield (1998) for Herodotus, Strassler (1996) for Thucydides. I completed and submitted this chapter in 1999, well before the publication of Thomas (2000) which is crucial for the second section; unfortunately, at this late stage I can only acknowledge its contribution by adding references to the footnotes. I owe thanks for valuable comments to Deborah Boedeker, Carolyn Dewald, Irad Malkin, Rosaria Munson, Marek Wecowski, and the Fellows of the Center for Hellenic Studies in 1999–2000, esp. Peter Hunt, Ted Lendon, and John Marincola.

[2] On all this and the entire section on Thucydides, see esp. Hornblower (1987); (1994a) 17, 24–9; (1994b); (1996b) (with recent bibliog.); de Romilly (1963); Cawkwell (1997). Date of death: Hornblower (1987) 4, 151–3; see also Hunter (1977).

the very time when Herodotus was writing the history of another and presented some of his *logoi* in 'lectures', perhaps even in Athens. Thucydides certainly knew the *Histories* and in his own work reacted to his most important predecessor. He shares with him—long anticipated by Homer—an 'overarching thematic conception, a great war', and a passion for war as the greatest challenge to human *aretē* and most enduring source of human glory.[3]

For my present purpose, some specific characteristics of Thucydides' work are especially important. One is that he usually does not give us insight into the evidence or train of thought underlying his narrative. Early on, he explains, in famous chapters (1.20–2), his methodology and then simply tells us the results of his investigation.[4] Second, Thucydides' writing of history focuses almost exclusively on political events (of which warfare is a crucial part); hence it is to him, modern scholars conclude, that we owe 'the discovery of political history'.[5] Third, his interpretation is often based on theoretical assumptions that were current in his time, as attested by Euripides and the 'Old Oligarch', among others, and on ideas developed by philosophers, sophists, and medical writers.[6]

Fourth, Thucydides offers his work as 'an everlasting possession (*ktēma es aiei*), rather than a prize composition which is heard and then forgotten' (1.22.4).[7] In other words, familiarity with history is useful—presumably as a means to master future challenges. Clearly, however, history can serve this function only if it contains a stable element in its constant flow and infinite variety. Thucydides finds

[3] In emphasizing the similarities between the two authors—an aspect still far too often ignored—I am aware of the obvious risk of making Herodotus look too much like Thucydides: this is *not* my intention (see below at n. 106). On Thucydides and Herodotus, see recently Stahl (1983) 219 n. 37 (end); Pelling (1991); Moles (1993) esp. 98 ff.; Scanlon (1994), and esp. Hunter (1982); Hornblower (1987) Ch. 1; (1992b); (1994a) 22 (quot.), 25; (1996a) 19–38; (1996b) 1521; Rood (1999). On Herodotus and Homer, see Boedeker, this volume (Ch. 5, pp. 97–109).

[4] But see Gribble (1998) on authorial interventions in Thucydides.

[5] Strasburger (1954b); Momigliano (1958) 4–5 = (1966) 130–1.

[6] Euripides: Finley (1942), (1967); de Romilly (1984). Pseudo-Xenophon: Frisch (1942) 79–87, but see de Romilly (1962). Theory: e.g., Hussey (1985); Hornblower (1987) Ch. 5; Rechenauer (1991); Price (2001) Ch. 1 (with bibliog.).

[7] Hornblower's formulation ((1991) 61). In *agōnisma es to parachrēma akouein* most scholars (e.g., Hornblower, *ibid.*; Fornara (1971a) 60; Gould (1989) 112) see an allusion to Herodotus' performances; cf. 1.21.1. Boedeker (1995) raises a different possibility (elegiac praise poetry on historical events, such as Simonides' elegy on Plataea: Sim. 10–8 in West (1992); see Boedeker and Sider (2001)); cf. Hornblower (1996a) 27–8, 39–40.

this in human nature which he considers essentially unchanging. Hence empirical data collected from history make it possible to analyse, categorize, understand, and anticipate human behaviour—in comparable situations men will always act similarly—and, by extension, the course of political developments.[8] Thucydides' thinking here seems influenced by medical theory; his descriptions of the plague in Athens (2.47–53) and the civil war in Corcyra (3.81–4) offer spectacular diagnoses of socio-political illness. Logically, then, typical behaviour is attributed to communities as well: as the antithetical portrait of Athens and Sparta illustrates (1.70–1), each has its own distinct character that prompts it to act in specific ways; yet in comparable situations they would act similarly (1.76).[9]

Fifth, human nature is dominated by two antithetical desires—for liberty and power—which determine individual and collective action; ideals or laws are unable to contain them (3.45). Hence they provide the primary categories of historical explanation; where they fall short, individual decisions and incalculable chance (*tuchē*) need to be taken into account. This view of history as a constant struggle for power and domination (*dunamis* and *archē*), rooted in human nature, in which the strongest prevails without consideration for tradition, laws, or justice, originates in sophistic theories contrasting *phusis* and *nomos*, nature and human convention—best known to us from Plato's *Gorgias* and *Republic* I. It is applied most radically to historical explanation in the Melian Dialogue (5.84–114), a set piece designed to analyse the nature of imperialism, just as the piece on the stasis on Corcyra analyses the nature of civil strife.[10] In such set pieces and in carefully crafted speeches the historian reminds us of his understanding of the essential factors that drive human decisions and actions.

Sixth, Thucydides engages in a persistent effort at demythologizing and de-ideologizing history. Through selection, emphasis, and direct statement he reveals the truths that in everyday politics are

[8] 1.22.4; cf., e.g., 1.84.4; 3.82.2. See Reinhold (1985); Hornblower (1996a) 61 with bibliog.

[9] This is confirmed by Thucydides' demonstration of how Sparta too eventually turns from liberator to oppressor of the Greeks (Raaflaub (1985) 248–57), an idea developed fully in Xenophon's *Hellenica*: Tuplin (1993); Dillery (1995); Sterling (1998). *Stasis* in Thucydides: Price (2001).

[10] Bibliog. on power and imperialism in Thucydides is immense; it is cited in Raaflaub (1994) 105 n. 6; see also Ober (2001). Freedom: e.g., Diller (1962). *Phusis* and *nomos*: Heinimann (1945); Guthrie (1962–9) 3, Ch. 4. Melian Dialogue: Andrewes in Gomme et al. (1970) esp. 182–8; Crane (1998) esp. Ch. 9 (links with Herodotus).

camouflaged by propaganda. For instance, in the Melian Dialogue the Athenians declare that they will not use 'beautiful phrases saying, for example, that we have a right to our empire because we defeated the Persians . . ., a great mass of words that nobody would believe' (5.89). In reality, of course, the Athenians did use such *onomata kala*, but the historian's intent is to show that, whatever they say, the true motives of individuals and states are hunger for power and self-interest.[11] Overall, then, the historian extricates from the mass of historical data the basic forms of political motives, actions and relations, within and between communities, that underlie all historical events and processes and that help us to cut through appearances and reach a deeper understanding.[12]

Keeping all this in mind, we now turn to Herodotus. He was no Athenian, although he spent time in Athens and was passionately concerned with and about this city.[13] He came from Halicarnassus, a Dorian *polis* with strong Carian elements in an area that was dominated by Ionian politics and thinking and had long served as a bridge between east and west, and he spent most of his life away from home as an exile, traveller, and colonist. His specific background and experiences are often considered important in explaining his openness, unbiased and balanced outlook, and interest in other cultures and in history.[14] He is usually thought to have died around the mid- to late-420s, a quarter-century before Thucydides, presumably shortly after his work was published. Because of the likelihood of extensive 'pre-publication' of parts through recitation and other means, the concept of 'publication' in this case now appears much more complicated and may no longer be useful as a dating device. Moreover, Charles Fornara and others have offered compelling arguments for the possibility that he was alive and still working on his *Histories* a few years later.[15] However that may be, Herodotus

[11] Cf., e.g., 1.73.2, 75.3, 76.2; 6.83.2; Strasburger (1958); Raaflaub (1985) Ch. 5.

[12] See Hunter (1982) for Thucydides' (and Herodotus') focus on processes, especially the rise and fall of empires (*archē*).

[13] Strasburger (1955) (with Harvey (1966)); Ostwald (1991); Moles (1996) and this volume (Ch. 2). See also Rösler (Ch. 4).

[14] E.g., Gould (1989) 7–8; Thomas (2000) Ch. 1. See also Boedeker (1998) (on the status as critical outsider Herodotus shares with Thucydides); Syme (1962) 40 ('exile may be the making of an historian'); Hornblower (1987) 27–8.

[15] Fornara (1971b), (1981); Sansone (1985). Traditional date: Jacoby (1913) 229–32; Cobet (1977); Evans (1979a); (1991) 89–90. Prepublication: below at n. 46. On these issues, see also Moles, this volume (Ch. 2) and Rösler (Ch. 4).

certainly experienced the early years of the Peloponnesian War and much of the intellectual ferment of the Periclean and immediate post-Periclean years. We should expect these experiences to have left a mark in his work.

The common view holds, however, that Herodotus really belonged to an earlier generation, that he remained rooted, despite some overlaps with ideas of sophists and medical writers, in traditional beliefs, and that he did not work with theoretical assumptions.[16] Accordingly, until recently his relations to current intellectual trends were investigated much less thoroughly and with less sophistication than is the case with Thucydides. Titles one can cite in this context are still relatively few. It is perhaps symptomatic too that in speaking of 'Herodotus and his contemporaries', Robert Fowler thinks only of historians and ethnographers; would he do the same when discussing Thucydides?[17] Such assessment has, of course, been facilitated by Herodotus' specific ways of organizing and presenting his material, arguing his case and narrating his story. In all these respects he is different from Thucydides, and 'different' has all too often been taken to mean not only 'earlier' but also 'more primitive'.

In deliberate contrast to such views I propose here that Herodotus' interpretation of history is no less influenced by theories and overarching concepts of historical causation and dynamics than Thucydides'—even if he does not overtly argue with theory; that he is no less eager to work out the main forces that drive history and to debunk propaganda and ideologies—even if he does this indirectly rather than directly; that he is no less concerned with political history—even if he does not focus narrowly on politics; and that he offers us no less insight into his main concerns and principles—even

[16] See the summary of this view in Thomas (2000) 6–8.

[17] Fowler (1996); by contrast, Hornblower (1987) 16 thinks, when mentioning Thucydides' contemporaries, first of 'the "pre-Socratic" thinkers . . . in the broadest sense (i.e., doctors and orators as well as philosophers)'. See also Hunter (1982) 274, and the difference in the 'Wege der Forschung' volumes dedicated to Herodotus (Marg (1965)) and Thucydides (Herter (1968)): theory figures prominently in the latter, not at all in the former. Recent changes: e.g., Müller (1981); Lateiner (1986), (1989); Hornblower (1987) Ch. 1 (esp. 16, referring to a statement by Myres (1953) 43: 'In the collection of facts about Man, and in the interpretation of them, Herodotus is the only "Pre-socratic" writer who is preserved in full.'); Thomas (1993), (1997) (see 131–2 for the sharp contrast between Herodotus and Thucydides traditionally emphasized in scholarship), and esp. (2000). For the persistence of traditional beliefs and explanations in Herodotus, see, e.g., Lloyd (1979) 29–32; Meier (1987) 47, 52.

if he does not formulate them abstractly.[18] In this chapter, I shall discuss first correspondences between Herodotus and his intellectual predecessors and contemporaries among philosophers and scientists, then look more closely at the role of historical and political thought in his work, and at the end return to the question of similarities with Thucydides.

In principle, I suggest, we should think of Herodotus as interacting with rather than simply depending on contemporary intellectual trends or ideas found in other works. The author of the medical treatise on *Airs, Waters, Places*, preserved in the Hippocratic corpus, probably did not invent the theories of the influence of climate and environment on national character that both he and Herodotus, perhaps around the same time, applied in characteristically different ways to their very different subjects. Just as analogies between Thucydides and Euripides, among others, indicate not that one depended on the other but that both drew on ideas and modes of thinking that were current in their time, so too, I think, Herodotus, sophists, and medical writers, among others (including Thucydides), all drew on a large and vibrant pool of ideas and methods that, although probably each originating with one author and at one specific time, interacted with one another, were advanced further by such interaction, and became part of an intellectual *koinē* in late fifth-century Hellas.[19] Such interaction probably was especially intense and productive in Athens but certainly not limited to it. Moreover, for a Greek 'intellectual', whether thinker, writer, or artist, whether historically interested or not, Athenian or not, the domestic and imperial policies, the past and present role of Athens offered extraordinary opportunities and a special challenge which could not but deeply affect his outlook and thinking.[20]

[18] I find support for these suggestions especially in the works of Hunter, Hornblower, and Thomas, cited earlier.

[19] Similarly Fowler (1996) 69. See Hunter (1982) 282–4 for the need to establish the intellectual and theoretical context in which Herodotus and Thucydides developed their interpretation and methodology of history—a need now largely met for Herodotus by Thomas (2000). Thucydides and Euripides: n. 6. *Airs, Waters, Places*: below n. 41. On the development of genres: Depew and Obbink (2000).

[20] Ostwald (1992); Sakellariou (1996); Boedeker and Raaflaub (1998). This is true even if one tries to avoid Athenocentrism (see Thomas (2000) 9–16).

Philosophical and Scientific Thought

I begin by mentioning some patterns of thought or 'habits of mind' that Herodotus shares with many authors.[21] These include, most basically, an immense interest in what is wondrous and astonishing (*thōmaston*); such curiosity, although already visible in Homer's epics, was greatly enhanced by the expansion of the Greek horizon especially in the sixth and early fifth centuries.[22] Another pattern might be labelled 'the *post hoc ergo propter hoc* fallacy', which dictates that what is older must be the cause or origin of what is younger; it underlies much of the popular belief that the Greeks imported many of their gods, customs, and laws from Egypt. For example, 'the Egyptians were the first people in the world to hold general festive assemblies, and religious processions and parades, and the Greeks learnt from the Egyptians. My evidence for this suggestion is that these activities have obviously been going on in Egypt for a very long time, whereas they have only recently started in Greece' (2.58, cf. 104). Related with this pattern is the Greek obsession with the *prōtos heuretēs* and the conviction that a specific thing or custom can have originated only in one place and at one time.[23]

Furthermore, Greek thought tends toward schematization: it emphasizes polarity between opposed things, antithetical patterns, symmetry and linear as well as cyclical developments. Hence, for example, the importance of genealogies in history as well as cosmogonic and theogonic speculation, or the symmetry in early world maps—a fallacy Herodotus fights (4.36) but succumbs to in turn when discussing the course of the Nile and its relation to the Danube (2.33–4), just as he over-schematizes the difference between Egyptian and foreign customs: 'almost all Egyptian customs and practices are the opposite of those of everywhere else' (2.35–6).[24] Closely related is the custom of

[21] Lloyd (1975) 1.141–55; cf. 156 (quot.).

[22] See below at n. 37. Barth (1968); Lloyd (1975) 1.141–7, 153–4; Bloomer (1993) (emphasizing 'Herodotus' peculiar vision . . . that sees not the average or the typical but the extreme as definitive and worthy of record' (33)).

[23] Other examples include 1.171 (Caria); 2.4, 43, 49–50, 177; 4.180 (Egypt); 4.189 (Libya); by contrast, the Scythians do not import customs from elsewhere: 4.76–80. See Froidefond (1971); Hunter (1982) Ch. 2 and 102, 272 (Herodotus as a 'diffusionist'). Lloyd (1975) 1.49–60, 147–9 and in this volume (Ch. 18); Zhmud (1997) 57–60 discuss this fallacy and reject the historicity of many of these borrowings and of the connected travels of famous personalities to Egypt. *Prōtos heuretēs*: Kleingünther (1933).

[24] Cf. 3.106–16; 4.5; 4.82 with 2.35. See generally G. Lloyd (1966); A. Lloyd

thinking through comparison and analogy: they provide the means to explain and reconstruct, to progress from the known to the less known and draw inferences even on the unknown.[25] Again related are two widely popular types of argument: that from past experience (Xerxes' uncle, Artabanus, uses Darius' failure against the Scythians and the near-destruction of the bridge over the Danube to advise against a campaign to conquer Greece (7.10)), and the argument from probability (Helen could not possibly have been in Troy during the war because any sane ruler would have returned her to the Greeks immediately or at least after the Trojans incurred the first heavy losses (2.120.1–3)).[26]

All these patterns of thought were greatly advanced and enhanced by intellectual developments connected first with the emergence of Ionian philosophy from the mid-sixth century, then with the emergence of sophistic and scientific thinking from the mid-fifth century. Although Herodotus rarely mentions them by name, it is abundantly clear that he was thoroughly familiar with the ideas, theories, and modes of thought and discourse of the leading intellectuals, from Thales and Anaximander to his own contemporaries and that he not only applied such ideas and theories frequently, though selectively, in his narrative and interpretation but also attempted in various ways to participate in current debates among intellectuals or to correct and influence popular views.[27] Much less clear, however, is whether he was inspired directly by their works or indirectly by a pool of knowledge that had become generally available to the Greek intellectuals of his generation.

From among many examples, I mention only a few, not least to illustrate the wide range of issues involved.[28] Anaximander's map of

(1975) 1.149–53; Gould (1989) Ch. 5; Hartog (1988); Thomas (2000) Ch. 3. Genealogy: Fornara (1983) 4–12; theogonic poetry: West (1966) 1–16, esp. 12 ff.; maps: Dilke (1985) Ch. 2. See also Greenwood and Cartledge, this volume (Ch. 15, p. 365).

[25] Analogy: explicitly stated in 2.33 ('since we may draw on the familiar to understand the unknown'); see Lloyd (1966); Hunter (1982) index s.v.; Corcella (1984). Comparison: examples abound; e.g. 2.103–5 on the Egyptian origin of the Colchians.

[26] See Müller (1981) 307–11.

[27] For example, Herodotus is interested in some of the social, political, religious, and scientific ideas of the early philosophers but clearly not in their metaphysical speculations: Nestle (1908) 6–12; (1942) 505–8. On Herodotus' participation in current debates, see Thomas (2000) Ch. 2 and *passim*.

[28] For a detailed survey with full documentation, see Nestle (1908), summarized in id. 1942 503–14; see also Lloyd (1975) 141–70; Thomas (2000) (on natural philosophy, esp. Ch. 5).

the earth, revised by Hecataeus, is used by Aristagoras of Miletus in his quest to attract Spartan support for the Ionian revolt (5.49; cf. 4.36).[29] Pythagoras' doctrine of the transmigration of souls is considered plagiarized from Egypt (2.123; cf. 4.95). Xenophanes' critique of Homer's and Hesiod's stories about all too human gods and of the concept of anthropomorphic deities (D–K 21 B11–16) is incorporated into the description of Persian customs (1.131, cf. 2.53). The observation that much of Egypt, now silted up, was once flooded by the sea (2.11–12) perhaps draws on Xenophanes' explanation of fossils (D–K 21 A33.5). Empedocles' natural explanation of dreams (D–K 31 B108) is employed in vain by Artabanus to dispell Xerxes' fear of nightly visions (7.16β).

More generally, Ionian philosophical thinking is characterized by rationalization or rationality.[30] It suffices to refer to Xenophanes or to the sentence with which Hecataeus opens his *Genealogies*: 'Thus proclaims Hecataeus of Miletus: I write what I believe to be the truth; for many and ridiculous, so they seem to me, are the stories of the Greeks.'[31] Rational explanation or interpretation of myths, stories, or phenomena is prevalent in Herodotus, usually bolstered by empirical arguments. He has heard a report that the tyrant Polycrates was overthrown by a band of Samian exiles. 'I do not think this can be right, since they would not have had to send for the Lacedaemonians, if they were capable of bringing Polycrates down on their own. Besides, it also does not make sense to think that someone with vast numbers of mercenaries and native archers at his disposal would have been beaten by the few returning Samians' (3.45). Or, to continue a previous example, he reasons that the Trojans would have returned Helen to the Greeks, Paris' resistance notwithstanding, not only to save their city, but also because Hector, older and more of a man than Paris, was first in charge after Priam: 'It was Hector who would inherit the kingdom on Priam's death, and he was not the kind of man to let his brother get away with wrongdoing . . . No, the fact is that they did not have Helen to give back' (2.120.4–5). This in turn, Herodotus thinks, like so much else

[29] Dilke (1985) 23–5.

[30] For these terms, see Hunter (1982) 107–15. On Ionian philosophy: Guthrie (1962–9) volume 1; Barnes (1979); KRS, and, for a brief survey, Hussey (1972).

[31] *FGrH* 1 F1 (tr. Stambler (1982) 215); Fornara (1983) 5–6, however, warns against considering rationalization Hecataeus' primary concern. Xenophanes: D–K 21 B11–16, with the bibliog. cited in the previous note.

is due to the divine (*to daimonion*), 'so that in their annihilation the Trojans might make it completely clear to others that the severity of a crime is matched by the severity of the ensuing punishment at the god's hand. That is my view, at any rate' (*ibid.* 5).[32]

The historian thus attributes reasonable and rational motives to divine will and human actors (both individuals and collectivities), based on arguments from experience and probability.[33] It is typical of such rationalization that the distant past (or different peoples) are judged from the perspective of the here and now. As Hunter puts it, 'analogy like probability is based on the perception of similarities, the belief that individuals acted in the past, or will act in the future, much as they do in the present, and so that behaviour in the past can be reconstructed by using the analogy of the present'. Hence the theory underlying Herodotus' argument, although never formulated as a principle or abstractly by this historian, is the same as in Thucydides: 'human nature being what it is . . .'[34]

Furthermore, Ionian philosophy is greatly concerned with epistemology: the problem of what we can know and how we can know it. The extreme focus of such concern, again, are the gods, as is attested by a wide range of discussions and speculative theories from Xenophanes to Anaxagoras. Heraclitus, although postulating a duality of appearance and reality, also emphasizes the importance of empiricism, preferring things of which *opsis, akoē, mathēsis* are possible. Herodotus does not doubt but largely refuses to investigate the metaphysical world because it is inaccessible to *opsis, historiē*, and reason. As he explains, he does not intend to pursue *ta theia*, issues that 'belong to the trans-physical order of things', because he believes 'that everyone is equal in terms of knowledge about divine matters', that is, no person knows or can know more about them than any other. But the *anthrōpēia prēgmata*, 'all that belongs to the human sphere of activity', are part of the physical world and thus can be

[32] Other examples include 1.75; 2.45, 54–7, 131, 135; 4.31. See also Fehling (1989) esp. 96–104, 109–12. On the role of the *daimonion* and *theoi* envisaged here, see Immerwahr (1966) 308–11; Hunter (1982) 207–9; Stambler (1982) 217–25; Lateiner (1989) 196–205. On religion in Herodotus: Huber (1965a); Gould (1994); Bichler and Rollinger (2000) 54–9, and Mikalson, this volume (Ch. 8).

[33] See Müller (1981) 308; Hunter (1982) 111–3, on the difference between Ionian pure and Herodotus' empirical rationalism.

[34] Thuc. 1.22.4. Hunter (1982) 112, referring to Jacoby (1949) 133; cf., e.g., 3.72 which is based on a consistent and universal type of human nature.

the objects of rational inquiry (2.3–4).[35] Similarly, at the very beginning of his work, Herodotus distinguishes sharply between the sphere of what we would call myth—unverifiable contradictory accounts about a distant past—and the sphere (which we call historical) that is accessible to precise investigation and thus to knowledge (1.5). This distinction, Felix Jacoby observed, 'marks the creation of a historical work in our sense, in that it limits the historical narrative to historical time'. In the human sphere of activity and in historical time, where things can be known, the methods of how to acquire and verify such knowledge are crucial: Herodotus' careful establishment of a 'hierarchy of epistemological factors', ranking autopsy (*opsis*) above oral reports (preferably of eyewitnesses) and rational argument based on empirical knowledge and probability, and his constant application of source criticism need to be seen in the tradition of Ionian theories of knowledge.[36]

Another side of the great intellectual movement of sixth and early fifth-century Ionia is represented by geographical and ethnographic exploration, and here Herodotus' dependence on and critical interaction with his predecessors, Hecataeus foremost among them, and his contemporaries is well known.[37] In this sphere he often applies scientific methods and theories and displays an impressive combination of observation and analytical reasoning. I mention only his acute remarks on the physical geography of lower Egypt, 'a gift from the river' (2.5, 10–12), his involvement in the controversy about the

[35] Barth (1964); Lloyd (1975) 1.157–70 and, on 2.3–4, Lloyd's comm. *ad loc.* (quot.). Heracl. D–K 22 B55; KRS 188 n. 2: 'The things of which there is seeing and hearing and perception, these do I prefer'; but such perceptions need to be checked by understanding (*nous, phronēsis*: B107 with the comments by KRS, *ibid.*).

[36] On mythical time vs. historical time, see also 3.122 (but see 1.171 and Thuc. 1.4); Lateiner (1989) 63–7, and generally von Leyden (1949–50); Hunter (1982) Chs. 2–3; Calame (1996); Marincola (1997a) 117–27; Romm (1998) 1–6; *contra*: Nickau (1990). Jacoby (1913) 335, as quoted by Hornblower (1987) 18. See also Boedeker, this volume (Ch. 5, note 43) as well as Cobet (Ch. 17, note 55) and Osborne (Ch. 22). On 'hierarchy of epistemology': Müller (1981); Lateiner (1986), (1989) *passim*; Hornblower (1987) 20–1; Hartog (1988) Ch. 7; Marincola (1997a) 67 (quot.), 96; see also Cartledge and Greenwood (Ch. 15) as well as Hornblower (Ch. 16), this volume.

[37] Trüdinger (1918); on Hecataeus: Jacoby (1912); von Fritz (1967) 48–76; Fornara (1983) 12–6; see also West (1991), this volume (Ch. 19) and Karttunen, this volume (Ch. 20). Contemporaries: Thomas (2000) 42–74, arguing against overestimating Hecataeus' influence and for a wide range of information available to both Herodotus and the medical writers. On Herodotus' 'anthropology': Redfield (1985); Bichler (2000); Munson (2001), and see below at n. 101 ff.

boundary between Africa and Asia (2.15–17), and his headstrong discussion of the causes of the Nile's flooding (2.19–25).[38]

The sophists were a diverse group of thinkers and teachers; hence generalizations tend to be misleading.[39] Most of them taught rhetorical skills and explored functions and theories of language and communication. They greatly refined the use of various types of arguments from probability and honed the skills of formulating generally accepted ideas or concepts precisely and in artful *gnōmai*. The influence of these types of thought and expression are palpable on almost every page in Herodotus. He shows a marked interest in antilogy, in eristic speeches and debates which bristle with concise *gnōmai* and general truths, and in the meaning of names and other linguistic phenomena. Echoes of specific problems known to have been discussed by individual thinkers are frequent as well: thus the belief in a divinely ordained and maintained balance in nature is demonstrated here, as in Protagoras' myth (Plato, *Prot.* 321b), by the distribution of qualities in the animal world (3.108); the problem of involuntary murder, discussed by Protagoras (Plut. *Per.* 36) and Antiphon (*Tetr.* 2), is explored in the Adrastus story (1.35–45) far beyond the rational and legal aspects important to the sophist and rhetorician; Gorgias' discussion of justified deception (e.g., *Hel.* 10–11) reflects ethical relativism and the importance attributed to the *sumpheron* (advantage, interest) and is perhaps echoed in a speech given to Darius (3.72; cf. 1.138), while Hippias' condemnation of slander (D–K 86 B17) perhaps underlies Artabanus' words in 7.10ε.

The sophists, much more than the Ionian philosophers, focussed their attention on human society and interaction: they analysed and conceptualized various types of human behaviour and studied humans not as individuals and a species but as social and political beings (*zōia koinōnika* or *politika*). They were interested in political problems such as the nature and organization of power, constitutional theory, the contrast between *nomos* (convention, law) and *phusis* (nature), the

[38] On Herodotus' physical and cultural geography, see Gould (1989), Ch. 5, balancing to some extent Hartog (1988); on the division of continents, Thomas (2000) 80–6.

[39] Guthrie (1962–69) 3: pt. 1; Kerferd (1981a), (1981b); de Romilly (1992); Wallace (1998). On the issues raised in this and the following paragraph, see Nestle (1908) 14–34; (1942) 509–13; Dihle (1962b); Thomas (2000) Chs. 6–8. The judgment of Eduard Meyer (1892) 202 who denied any influence of the sophists and their rhetorical teachings remains astonishing.

mechanisms unleashed by *pleonexia* (greed, desire for more) or *ōphelia* (self-interest, advantage), and various aspects of 'right based on might'. Echoes in Herodotus abound; we might think of the speeches in Xerxes' crown council before the Greek expedition (including, e.g., a comment on *euboulia* (good counsel, 7.10δ.2)), of a brief digression, in a particularly dramatic episode, on speaking the truth or lying according to what is more profitable (*kerdos*, 3.72), or of Demaratus' explanation to Xerxes of why the Greeks, especially the Spartans, will fight even against vastly superior numbers: Xerxes sees them as individuals and counts numbers, thinking in terms of *phusis*, while Demaratus sees them as members of a community, held together, transformed and enhanced by *nomos* (7.102–4; cf. 5.78 on the Athenians after the fall of tyranny).

The most often cited case of sophistic influence is the 'Constitutional Debate' in 3.80–2, which some scholars think Herodotus lifted wholesale out of a sophistic treatise, perhaps of Protagoras. This is quite unlikely; rather, analogies in the works of several of Herodotus' contemporaries (most conspicuously in Euripides' *Suppliants*) suggest that discussions of the advantages and disadvantages of democracy, on a more or less theoretical level, were 'a hot topic' at the time. Although Herodotus' debate is the most complex to survive, the author's own comments (3.80; 6.43) place the emphasis on democracy as well; in addition, it serves as one of several 'set pieces' on the nature of autocracy.[40]

Turning to the medical writers, several early treatises in the Hippocratic corpus are dated roughly to the last third of the fifth century and thus to a time near the publication date traditionally assumed for Herodotus' work. As in the case of the sophists, in some instances Herodotus' familiarity with their ideas seems palpable. Among other examples attesting to his interest in exceptional anatomical and physiological phenomena (1.68; 9.83), I single out the discussion (3.12) of the markedly different bone thickness of the Persian and Egyptian skulls still visible on an old battle site. Herodotus concludes that the Egyptians had their heads shorn, while the Persians habitually wore felt hats. This argument, related to others that explain the human constitution and character with climatic factors or social customs is close to statements typically found in the 'Hippocratic'

[40] Stroheker (1953/54); Gschnitzer (1977); Bleicken (1979); Raaflaub (1989) esp. 41–6; Lateiner (1989) Ch. 8. 'Set piece': below at n. 81.

treatise, *Airs, Waters, Places*.[41] Although with specific and clearly intentional differences, Herodotus frequently applies theories, known from this essay (esp. 12, 16, 24), that a balanced mixture of seasons or a stable climate are best for human health and success, while, conversely, radical changes in climate, temperatures or humidity are detrimental to human well-being (e.g., 2.77; cf. 2.35; 3.106; 1.142), or that the richness or poverty of a country is directly connected with the softness or toughness of the people living on and from it. Such theories probably originated in ethnographic thought and in what we would call 'anthropological or comparative psychology'; the overlap between ethnographic, sophistic, and medical theories is especially noticeable here.[42]

Knowledge of such theories can be used to manipulate people: when the Lydians, 'the most courageous and warlike race in Asia' (1.79), revolt against the Persians soon after their subjection, Croesus tries to save them from extinction by suggesting to Cyrus a method of treatment that will keep them from revolting again: 'Send a message that they are forbidden to own weapons of war, that they are to wear tunics under their coats and slippers on their feet, that they are to take up the cithara and the harp, and that they are to raise their sons to be retailers. Before long, my lord, you will see them become women instead of men' (1.155). Cyrus follows this advice—and the Lydians join the long list of Persian subjects preferring wealth in slavery over freedom in poverty. One exception are the Persians themselves who, upon Cyrus' warning, 'chose to live in a harsh land and rule rather than to cultivate fertile plains and be others' slaves' (9.122).[43] The other exception are the mainland Greeks, in particular the Spartans, who resist Persian aggression because—and here Herodotus' ethical perspective transcends sober scientific theory—

[41] For a modern explanation of the skulls' difference: Althoff (1993) 1–10, and see Fehling (1989) 28–30; Pritchett (1993) 29–32; Thomas (2000) 31–2. *Airs*, date: e.g., Diller (1934) 114 (*c.* 400); Pohlenz (1938) 45 (430–415); Heinimann (1945) 209 (shortly before 430); Jouanna (1999) 375 (2nd half fifth cent.); interpretation: e.g., Diller (1934); Backhaus (1976); Thomas (2000) 86–98; relation to Herodotus: Heinimann (1945) 172–80; Jouanna (1981) 11–15. Generally on Herodotus' relations to the medical writers, see Thomas (2000) Ch. 2.

[42] For a good example of 'applied psychology', see 1.173. Herodotean differences: Munson (2001). For detailed discussion, see Thomas (2000) 103–14 and, on science and natural philosophy, Ch. 5.

[43] On the problem of how this passage is compatible with 1.125–6 and Herodotus' overall schema of a stark contrast between poor but tough Greeks and luxurious and soft Persians (below at n. 77), see recently Moles (1996) 274–5.

tied into a close-knit community by a superior *nomos*, they overcome the restraints of poverty and the temptations of individualism and rise to achieve indomitable *aretē* which makes it impossible for them to accept autocracy and slavery (7.102, cf. 104).[44]

As suggested above, some scholars see such correspondences less as proof of Herodotus' dependence on medical writers than as indication of a 'a shared epistemological response' or of profound familiarity with ideas and theories that developed in an atmosphere of intense exchange and debate. Donald Lateiner, especially, argues that the comparison between the two writers can show 'that Herodotus and the medical writers shared certain ideas about methodology, *what* can be known, *how* it can be known, and the limits of useful knowledge. They are fellows in the older, less specialized sense of science: knowledge gained through experience. They share an attitude more than a specific subject, an ideal of analysis rather than a specific method. They seek reliable conclusions from the available data, and from specific events (an epidemic or a war) try to discover more general patterns of human behavior and experience'.[45]

It is thus undeniable that Herodotus shares with contemporary thinkers a wide range of ideas, assumptions, and methods. Moreover, Rosalind Thomas demonstrates that he also shares with them the ways of presenting such ideas in public: through performance and oral disputation rather than through writing. J. A. S. Evans concludes that the concept of 'publication' in one single moment therefore seems anachronistic—although perhaps, since the work was undoubtedly published at some moment in the form in which we have it, and presumably revised or even rewritten for this purpose, one might rather say the concept seems insufficient to describe a more complex process of 'publication in stages', including readings or performances of 'work in progress': sections, snippets, even parts that might eventually be left out.[46] As Thomas sees it, these oral

[44] See Dihle (1981) 59–63; Lateiner (1989) 160–1, and cf. Konstan (1987); specifically on *nomos*: Humphreys (1987). See also van Wees, this volume (Ch. 14).

[45] Lateiner (1986); Althoff (1993); see also Rechenauer (1991); Thomas (2000). On the relation between Herodotus and the medical writers, as regards the concepts of *historiē* and *aitiē*, see also Bakker, this volume (Ch. 1, p. 13).

[46] Thuc. 1.21.1, 22.4 presupposes oral performances, not least by *logographoi*; see above n. 7. See Momigliano (1978) 61–6; Hunter (1982) 294–5 ('it is an oral work committed to writing'); Lateiner (1989) 234 n. 15; Evans (1991) 89–90 and Ch. 3; Thomas (1992) 125–6, elaborated in *id.* (1993) esp. 228–30; (2000) 20 and Ch. 8; Hornblower (1996a) 26, while Flory (1980), Wecowski (2000) final chapter, argue

performances were more stimulating, even antagonistic, than is generally envisaged. Here too, she finds many close similarities in style and mode of argument with the earliest essays of the Hippocratic corpus; what they especially have in common 'is a mode of presentation and performance that belongs to the oral displays or contests of the early sophistic generation'. She considers such competitive oral displays an important means of intellectual inquiry and the transmission of knowledge.[47]

All this, however relevant in and by itself, is only the foundation for the next and more important task which is too large and complex to be tackled here: to determine how exactly Herodotus uses the ideas, arguments, debating techniques, rhetorical devices, and fact-finding methodologies which he shares with his contemporaries, to what extent and why his uses differ from theirs, and what purpose they serve in each individual context and in the overall intention of his work. Great progress toward this goal has been achieved recently in Rosalind Thomas' important book (2000) which places Herodotus firmly in the context sketched here, of ethnography, science, philosophy, and rhetoric.[48]

Historical and Political Thought

Historical and political thought expresses itself in the selection of and emphasis placed upon specific historical data, their arrangement into a historical narrative, and their interpretation. It also concerns the purpose of writing history and the meaning the historian finds—and wants his audience to find—in history. Here Herodotus appears highly original, a real pathbreaker—none of his predecessors' works seem to have come close in scope, complexity, and depth of thought—although he certainly did not develop his innovative view and use of history in isolation; rather, I assume, these resulted from his close interaction with the ideas and concerns of other leading thinkers of his time.[49]

against seeing the *Histories* primarily as a work of oral performance. See also Bakker, this volume (Ch. 1, pp. 8–12).

[47] Thomas (1993), (1997), (2000) Ch. 8; cf. Hornblower (1987) 16, 20–1.

[48] Much should also be expected from Munson (2001) see *id.* (1991).

[49] Especially perhaps the Athenian tragedians (see Saïd this volume, Ch. 6) but the pool of 'intellectuals' was much larger and more diverse than the preserved

Extreme views like that of Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, that Herodotus had neither political understanding nor historical sense, have long been abandoned.[50] Still, few have recognized fully that the storyteller in fact has an acute sense for political issues and that his understanding of history is informed by his political insight. In an earlier publication, I argued that Herodotus' political thinking is closely comparable to that visible in Homeric epic and fifth-century tragedy. Like these poetic works, Herodotus' *Histories* is complex, dealing with many issues and serving several purposes.[51] One component—in my view an especially important one—is political; it addresses immediately the author's contemporaries and indirectly, I believe, all future generations. Through occasional explicit comments but mostly through dramatic narrative, discourse between actors, and by implication and association, 'the historian of the past frequently interacts with the present and encourages his audience to do the same . . . [He] uses the history of the past to shed light on contemporary political issues'. Hence the *Histories* aims at increasing the political awareness of the audience, to educate them, to prepare them for the great challenges of present and future. This, I suggest, is not greatly different from Thucydides' purpose in writing history.[52]

Two examples will illustrate how implied contemporary meaning can be read in individual stories. The Corinthians' opposition to Sparta's plan to reinstate Hippias as tyrant of Athens, and Hippias' warning that the Corinthians would regret this 'when the time came, as it surely would, for them to suffer at Athenian hands', recall the Corinthians' role in 432 in urging Sparta to take up the fight against Athens, now the tyrant city oppressing the Greeks.[53] The unsuccessful attempt of the Samian Macandrius to become the most just of men by stepping down from tyranny (3.142) reminds us of debates in

works seem to suggest; see above at n. 19. Originality: e.g., Fornara (1971a): 25–6; Hunter (1982); Fowler (1996). See further esp. Meier (1978), (1980), (1986), (1987).

[50] Waters (1972) 138, referring to Wilamowitz (1905) 56.

[51] Emphasized rightly by Romm (1998) 8.

[52] Raaflaub (1987) quot. 231; cf. esp. Strasburger (1955); Fornara (1971a) Ch. 4. See also Waters (1972); Stahl (1983) 218; Pelling (1991) 121; Stadter (1992) 782, 784, the bibliog. cited in n. 56 and, more generally, Stahl (1987) 19–42. For possible objections to this view, see below at n. 93 ff.

[53] Hdt. 5.93, cf. explicit references also in 90–1; Thuc. 1.67–71, 118–24. Reference to an earlier time is unlikely: Thucydides confirms that by 440 the relations between Athens and Corinth were not yet permanently soured (1.40.5, 41.2; perhaps mentioned also in the opening lines of ML 56); see Hornblower (1991) 83.

Athens in 429, immortalized in Pericles' last speech in Thucydides (2.63), about the dangers involved in letting go of tyranny.[54]

Other scholars have carried this type of study further and shown that many more stories can be read in this way and that Herodotus' overall concern aims beyond the particular at the general and topical. In fact, the historian seems to have structured his work consciously so as to keep his audience constantly aware of their present, troubled as it was by disunity and constant warfare among Hellenes, imperialism, tyrannical oppression, and enslavement of cities. As seems natural for a contemporary of the Athenian empire and the Peloponnesian War, such topicality focuses heavily, though far from exclusively, on the political and historical role of Athens.[55] Skillful foreshadowing on a large and small scale, the frequent repetition of a set of specific motifs, and the use of highly charged terms or arguments familiar to Herodotus' contemporaries draw attention to themes the historian considers crucial and elicit associations with the continuing importance of these same themes far beyond the chronological limits of the *Histories*. Allusions to events of the Pentecontaëtia and the early phases of the Peloponnesian War[56] as well as explicit authorial comments confirm that Herodotus was thinking along these lines and that we are permitted to do so too. One famous example, made even more poignant because Thucydides contradicts it, is the reference to an earthquake on Delos in 490, while the Persians were crossing the Aegean, a unique event 'up to my day'. 'This was an omen sent by the god, surely, to warn people of the trouble that was to come. After all, for three successive generations . . . Greece suffered more than it had for twenty generations before Darius, partly as a result of Persian action there, but partly because of power struggles between the leading Greek states' (6.98).[57]

Other comments or speeches are formulated or stories told in ways that make it difficult not to think of contrasts, analogies, or later devel-

[54] 7.164 offers a positive contrast. Other examples in Raaflaub (1987) 226–9. See also Forsdyke, this volume (Ch. 23).

[55] Munson (1988); Shimron (1989); Stadter (1992); Moles (1996) as well as this volume (Ch. 2); Thompson (1996); see also Immerwahr (1966) Chs. 4, 5, and conclusion; Smart (1977) 251–2 (although marred by the assumption of a far too late publication date); Hunter (1982); Nicolai (1986).

[56] E.g., 6.91, 109; 7.7, 106–7, 235; for a more complete list and discussion of such passages, see Cobet (1971) 59–78; for the latest references, Fornara (1971b), (1981).

[57] See Thuc. 2.8.3 with Hornblower (1991) *ad loc.*; Stadter (1992) 788–90.

opments that must have been uppermost in the minds of Herodotus' audiences. Famous examples include statements about the Athenians' role in the Persian Wars. When Mardonius offers them peace and a special position of power in Greece if they join the Persian side, they decline: there is not enough gold or fertile land in the world to prompt them to collaborate with the enemy and enslave Greece, mostly because of 'the fact that we are all Greeks—one race speaking one language, with temples to the gods and religious rites in common, and with a common way of life. It would not be good for Athens to betray all this shared heritage' (8.144; cf. 9.4, 6–11). Here and elsewhere the implied reading is clear: the same Athenians who declined an advantageous alliance with Persia, who for the sake of unity yielded to Spartan claims to leadership (8.3, but see 7.160–1), and whose decision to defend Greek liberty was decisive in saving it (7.139), later turned enslavers of Greeks and became the *polis tyrannos* against which the Spartans eventually rallied with their own battle cry of freedom (Thuc. 2.8).[58]

I consider it legitimate, therefore, to read the *Histories inter alia* as a commentary on political trends and developments of Herodotus' own time.[59] Moreover, the work provides general analyses of important political phenomena and reveals insight into what we might call 'laws or lessons of history'.[60] This is an important and still undervalued aspect of Herodotus' work and a substantial contribution to the development of political and historical thought. Since Herodotus' text offers few explicit statements, this type of inquiry has to rely largely on suggestions and implications; its results cannot strictly be proved, and the plausibility of such results rests on the cumulative power of many arguments pointing in the same direction. Here I limit myself to discussing two extended passages: the Croesus *logos* in Book One and the description of the debates in Xerxes' crown council in Book Seven.

That the first book has a 'programmatic' or 'paradigmatic' function

[58] See Fornara (1971a) 84–6; *ibid.* 62–74 on the treatment of Pausanias and Themistocles; on the latter also Munson (1988) 99–106. For this and the following, see also Moles, this volume (Ch. 2, p. 51).

[59] Similarly, Rood (1999) 165. To avoid misunderstandings, I repeat that I mean neither that this is Herodotus' only purpose nor that this purpose is prominent everywhere and equally throughout the work. For an excellent reading that focuses on entirely different aspects, see Cobet (1971).

[60] Fornara (1971a) 78–9, 87–8.

has long been recognized. Within this book, I suggest, the Croesus *logos* (1.5–91) serves the same function in a more condensed way: it announces programmatically many important themes that resonate throughout the *Histories* and far beyond.[61] I begin with a brief summary. It is Croesus whom Herodotus knows himself (that is, for certain) to have been 'the first to commit unjust deeds against the Hellenes' by subjecting 'some of them to the payment of tribute' (5–6, 27).[62] His ancestor, Gyges, gained the kingship (7–13) by violating social norms (seeing the king's wife naked) and committing a crime (killing the king), and Croesus is destined to suffer for it (13).[63] Other ancestors wage war frequently against Greek *poleis* (14–16) among which Miletus, immune against land attacks because its fleet controls the sea, ends up concluding a peace treaty and alliance with the Lydian king (17–22). Croesus himself pursues an aggressive policy of imperial expansion, subjecting almost all the peoples living west of the Halys river (28). At the height of his power, he is visited, among others, by Solon of Athens whose statements (29–33) emphasize *inter alia* the fragility of human life and the need to await the end before passing final judgments. Having risen rapidly to success and power, Croesus now experiences abrupt reversals in both his private and public life: his son is killed accidentally (34–46), and his war against the Persian king, Cyrus, ends in disaster. Before embarking on this campaign, Croesus enters into an alliance with Sparta which he discovers to be the more powerful of the two outstanding Greek states, Dorian Sparta and Ionian Athens, the latter at the time oppressed by Peisistratid tyranny (59–64), while the former has emerged as a well-ordered and prosperous state, predominant in the Peloponnese (65–8). Ignoring the warnings of a wise Lydian, Sandanis (71), Croesus crosses the Halys but eventually loses

[61] First book: Fornara (1971a) 18; Evans (1991) 49; Moles (1996) 259; Lateiner (1989) 259 n. 45 ('paradigmatic function'). On Herodotus' use of the figure of Croesus, see, e.g., Immerwahr (1966) 81–8, 154–61; White (1969); Bichler (2000) 244–55; Moles, this volume (Ch. 2). The 'Archaeology' serves a similar function in Thucydides' work: Hunter (1982) Ch. 1. On the Croesus *logos*, see also Fisher, this volume (Ch. 9, pp. 218 ff.).

[62] On the problem of the accuracy of this statement, see Heuss (1973) 388–90; Lloyd (1984); Asheri (1988) ciii–civ, both with earlier bibliog.

[63] Not by chance, Gyges is the first for whom the Greeks used the word *tyrannos* (Archil. fr. 19 West). Transgressions against women and their revenge frame the work (1.1–5, 8–12; 9.108–13) and are typical of the 'tyrannical template': Dewald (2002) and below at n. 81; see also Blok, this volume (Ch. 10, pp. 230–1).

the war, is captured, put on the pyre, and saved miraculously in the last moment—to become a wise, though mostly unheeded, advisor to Cyrus and Cambyses (85 ff.).[64]

I turn now to examining in more detail some of the issues raised in this *logos*—completeness naturally is impossible here—and first single out allusions to two specific issues that were discussed in Herodotus' time. In his response to Croesus, Solon denies the possibility of self-sufficiency (*autarkeia*), be it of an individual or a country (1.32), while the Athenians, says Thucydides, thought of their *polis* as *autarkestatē* and made analogous claims for their citizens.[65] Among Croesus' motives for attacking Persia, three (revenge, greed, and faith in oracles: 1.46, 73) occur frequently in the *Histories*,[66] the fourth only here: Croesus 'began to wonder whether there might be a way for him to restrain the growing power of the Persian before it became too great' (1.46); such a consideration, according to Thucydides, was the true though unavowed cause of the Peloponnesian War.[67]

Croesus' injustice in subjecting formerly free Greek cities to tribute-paying slavery (1.5–6, 27) and the resulting struggle for freedom announce one of Herodotus' leitmotifs. The emphasis on tribute triggers thoughts of Athenian imperial practices.[68] In addition, the historian pointedly registers the rhythm of the Ionians' enslavement, liberation, and re-enslavement; liberty regained for the second time

[64] Like Solon's visit (Asheri (1988) 281–3; on its reference to contemporary Athens, see Moles (1996) 262–9) and probably much else, the ending of the *logos* is unhistorical: Croesus was almost certainly killed by Cyrus: Burkert (1985); Wiesehöfer (1987) 116–7. On the Croesus *logos*, see generally Regenbogen (1930a) Hellmann (1934); Heuss (1973); Flower (1991). For the following discussion the problem of the historicity of anything mentioned by Herodotus is immaterial: all that matters is his presentation and interpretation of events and issues. Thus, for example, the story of Democedes, the physician from Croton (3.125, 129–37), is largely unhistorical (Griffiths (1987)); what interests us here is that Herodotus presents him as one of the Greeks at the Persian court who helped motivate the king to conquer Greece (below at n. 82). On the 'tragic' aspects of the Croesus *logos*, see Saïd, this volume (Ch. 6, pp. 132–37).

[65] Thuc. 2.36.3 and esp. 41.1 with 51.3; see Macleod (1983) 151–2; Raaflaub (1985) 237–41; Loraux (1986a) 153–4; Scanlon (1994) 143–64 (with detailed interpretation and bibliog.); Moles (1996) 267–9.

[66] On revenge: de Romilly (1971b); Gould (1989) esp. Ch. 4; see also Bellen (1974); Gehrke (1987); Burnett (1998); Lendon (2000). Generally on causation: Immerwahr (1956); Lateiner (1989) Ch. 9; on war: Cobet (1986).

[67] Thuc. 1.23.6; cf. 88.1; Hornblower (1991) 65; Immerwahr (1956) 255. See also Hdt. 7.11 (below at n. 85) with Saïd (1981) 21.

[68] Tribute: Stadter (1992) 795–8. Liberty: von Fritz (1965); (1967) 243ff. *passim*; Havelock (1972) 46–52.

in 479 is protected by the Athenians who emerge as the leaders in the fight for the freedom of all Greeks. The audience knows, of course, that another enslavement of the Ionians, by those very Athenians, is not long in coming and a new war will eventually be waged not least for their liberation.[69] Anticipating this future conflict, the historian vastly overemphasizes the polarization between Sparta and Athens as the two outstanding states in Greece already in the mid-sixth century (1.56). In fact, as he notes himself, Athens at that time was still greatly inferior to Sparta.[70] Athens' rise to power, triggered, as in the cases of Sparta (1.65–8) and Miletus (5.28–30), by successful reforms (5.55–78),[71] begins only at the end of the sixth century and will reach its peak long after the Persian Wars.

That Miletus is a naval power and thus immune against land attacks (1.17) reminds us of late fifth-century discussions about sea power, the 'insularization' of Athens, and Pericles' strategy in the Peloponnesian War. The association is intended: the Lydian king's futile annual ravaging of the Milesian countryside unmistakably alludes to Peloponnesian invasions in Attica in the Archidamian War.[72] More generally, Miletus' reliance on its navy recalls the crucial importance of sea power in thwarting the expansion of eastern empires and in Greek empire building: Polycrates aspires to control the sea but aims at ruling over all of Greece when a Persian satrap promises him enough money (3.122).[73] Based on their fleet and the financial resources

[69] See 1.6, 27, 169; 2.1; 6.31–3; 9.90–2, 98, 104, 106. Cf. 5.76 on four Dorian invasions of Attica, prompting the audience to think of similar events in their own time.

[70] Stahl (1987) 57; Asheri (1988) 297; cf. Schaefer (1932) 251–60 on Sparta as *prostatēs tēs Hellados*. 1.68.6 on Sparta's 'rule' in the Peloponnese (*katestrammenē*) almost certainly points forward to conditions of Herodotus' own time (Raaflaub (1985) 89 n. 91, 159).

[71] Parallel between Sparta and Athens: Raaflaub (1988a) 213 n. 73; between Sparta and Miletus: Gorman (2001). The return of the bones of Orestes to Sparta (1.67–8; Boedeker (1993)), will have recalled the return of the bones of Theseus to Athens (Plut. *Kim.* 8.5–7; *Thes.* 36; see Ungern-Sternberg (1986)), an episode characteristically omitted by Thuc. 1.98.2; cf. Hornblower (1991) 150 (with bibliog.).

[72] Moles (1996) 260–1. 'Insularity' and sea power: e.g., Thuc. 1.143.5; 2.62.2–3; Ps.-Xen. *Ath. Pol.* 2.14–6; Starr (1978). Pericles' strategy: 1.141.2–144.1. Cobet (1971) 148–51 emphasizes different aspects. Munson (1986) suggests that even the brief Arion story, inserted here (1.23–4), although 'the only purely episodic insertion in the *Histories*', is structurally and thematically 'analogous to the work as a whole' (95, 98); see also n. 91 below.

[73] Cf. Pausanias' desire (*erōs*) to use his Persian connections to become tyrant over Greece (5.32). On *erōs* in this context, see Benardete (1969) 137–8; Dewald (2002);

of the allies, the Athenians will do just that, and it is the Persian alliance and money that both sides will seek early in the Peloponnesian War.[74]

Miletus' success in establishing a special relationship as a free and allied city with Alyattes (1.22), probably Croesus, and even Cyrus (1.141, 143), while the other *poleis* in Asia Minor fight and succumb individually (1.26, 141, 169), brings up two well-known key themes in the *Histories*—disunity and collaboration with the Persians—that will continue to trouble the Greeks after 479.[75] Unity in leadership and purpose, Herodotus insists, makes a populous and warlike people unbeatable. In contrast to the Thracians (5.3), Scythians (4.118–19), and Ionians (1.169–70), in 480 those 'who had the best interests of Greece at heart' not only impose peace among themselves but also 'try to find a way to unite the whole of the Greek world—to get everyone to think and act in concert' (7.145). This goal remains elusive, then as later, but among a small number of communities it is realized—briefly but with overwhelming results. In contrast to the Argives and Gelon of Syracuse (7.148–52, 157–63, 165), the Athenians agree to yield to Sparta's claims to leadership: 'They were right, because internal dissension is worse than a united war effort to the same degree that war is worse than peace' (8.3; cf. 1.87). Ironically, a system of conflict resolution by negotiation and arbitration, recommended by Mardonius' scathing comments on the Greeks' habit of 'going about things in the wrong way' (7.9β), is imposed on the Ionians by the Persians (6.42), while the free Greeks will continue to ignore arbitration agreements and to escalate their fratricidal wars.

In attacking the Persians, Croesus disregards a wise man's warning not to provoke war against tough men living a poor life in a rugged land; nothing is to be gained but much is to be lost (1.71). Again, two leitmotifs are announced here. That of the wise warner is one of Herodotus' most successful interpretative devices.[76] The

on *erōs* in late fifth-century political discourse, see bibliog. in Raaflaub (1994) 129–30; Monoson (1994); Wohl (1999).

[74] Thuc. 1.82.1; 2.7.1, 67.1; 4.50.2; see Lewis (1977) 62–70 and below at n. 82.

[75] See also 5.12–15; a positive counter-example: 3.138; cf. Hunter (1982) Ch. 5. Miletus is to be contrasted with Athens (8.144, but see 9.4, 6–11). See generally Gillis (1979). Immerwahr (1966) Ch. 5 emphasizes disunity as the motif that binds the Greek accounts together; see 187–8 on excess of unity as the 'basic condition of Persian greatness that also causes their downfall'; see further Konstan (1987).

[76] E.g., 4.83; 7.10; see Bischoff (1932); Lattimore (1939); Shapiro (forthcoming); Saïd, this volume (Ch. 6).

other concerns the contrast between poor and rich countries breeding tough and soft men that recurs throughout the work in many variations and serves especially to set Persian luxury off against Greek simplicity. Herodotus' overall conception clearly is that initial Persian toughness had long been eroded by the wealth they had acquired from their far-flung empire. Hence they were no match for the freedom-loving, poor and hardy Hellenes to whom, as Croesus says of the Massagetae (about to defeat Cyrus) 'a Persian-style good life and anything approaching real luxury' were unfamiliar (1.207).[77] Combining all this with Croesus' insight 'that human affairs are on a wheel, and that as the wheel turns around it does not permit the same people always to prosper' (1.207; cf. 1.5; 7.18, 203), we may again extrapolate. The Athenians, like all mainland Greeks living in a poor land, have proved their valour and experienced a meteoric rise to great power and wealth. They too will be corrupted by their empire and eventually fall. The first crankings of the wheel can be heard when Themistocles uses military force to extort monetary contributions from several islands (8.111–12).[78]

Croesus is the first empire builder in the *Histories*. He attacks and conquers his neighbours with a variety of justifications, some serious, some trivial (1.26, 46, 73), and proves insatiable in his aggressive policy of expansion. Bolstered by success and believing in his good fortune, he crosses the Halys, attacks a more resourceful enemy—and fails. This pattern of conquest and success, prompting overconfidence and further aggression that leads to eventual disaster is applied, as a structuring and interpretative device, to all Persian kings. Cyrus, Cambyses, Darius, and Xerxes fail at the end because they reach for the ends of the earth, cross boundaries imposed by nature and divine order (great rivers, the Hellespont, or the desert) and are defeated by nature and/or peoples that are culturally too different to be tamed by the methods with which the Persians suc-

[77] E.g., 9.80–2; cf. 8.26 and 7.102, 104, 135; 8.144. The contrast (on which see above at nn. 42–4) is too schematic; see, e.g., 9.122; 9.63 with 71 and 1.136; Gould (1989) 58–60.

[78] See Cobet (1971) 174–6 with n. 704. Note the striking parallel between 8.111 and 9.82. Thucydides too chooses Athens' dealing with a little island, Melos, to exemplify the problem of imperialism (5.84 ff.). See also Miltiades' ill-fated expedition to Paros (6.132–6, also to extort money, among other reasons). On Athens and softness, see Thuc. 2.40.1 and Moles (1996) 265–6; on the Croesus *logos* and Athens, Moles, this volume (Ch. 2).

ceeded before.[79] Much of this probably is Herodotus' free elaboration. As Aeschylus did before him, he stresses the boundaries between Asia and Europe, one to be ruled by the Persians, the other by the Greeks. Xerxes hubristically violates these limits, suffers defeat and loses a great army. Again we extrapolate: the *Histories* end with the Athenians' refusal to evacuate the Ionians from Asia Minor, their new alliance with some islands, and their capture of Sestos on the Hellespont (9.106, 114–18). There will soon be a larger alliance, a change of hegemony with a specious justification, and wars fought about the king's territory (8.3). If, however, Xerxes did wrong in crossing into Europe, what about the Athenians crossing into Asia?[80]

Finally, Herodotus introduces Croesus as *tyrannos* of all the peoples west of the Halys (1.6). This brings up the problem of tyranny, another major topic that pervades the *Histories*. As Carolyn Dewald demonstrates, on various levels ranging from the use of terminology and the development of a 'despotic template' to the negative characterization of most Greek tyrants and the identification of despotic elements in Persian monarchy, Herodotus explores the nature of autocracy and explains why it is fundamentally bad. The weaknesses he exposes, recurring repeatedly and concerning different persons, are not tied to individuals but structural: the results of many case studies enable him to move from the specific to the general and to define the nature of tyranny or despotism as such. This effort culminates in three 'set pieces', each illuminating a different aspect of the phenomenon: the Deioces story (1.96–100), the Constitutional Debate (3.80–2), and the speech of the Corinthian Socles (5.92).[81]

[79] Such as the nomadic Scythians (esp. 4.46) or the Greeks with their love for liberty, respect for *nomos*, and passion for participatory government (e.g., 1.153; 7.135; 7.104). On typical and recurring patterns, see Immerwahr (1966) Ch. 4; Hunter (1982) Ch. 5. See also Harrison, this volume (Ch. 24).

[80] Aesch. *Persians* 101–13, 739–86. Boundaries: e.g., 1.4; 9.116; Immerwahr (1954); Lateiner (1989) Ch. 6; Stadter (1992) 785–95, 798–801; Romm, forthcoming. Note at the end of 9.117 the hint at Athens on the move: Fornara (1971a) 81. The future change of hegemony (478/77) is announced in highly unfavourable terms (8.3); the formulation of the oath sworn by the allies reminds us of future oppression and revolts (9.106). Nor is the single reference to Pericles (6.131: Agariste's dream to give birth to a lion) unambiguous: Fornara (1971a) 52–6; see also *ibid.* 83–4 on 7.162.1; Hornblower (1991) 346 on 3.82.4. Morrison (1941) 11–4; (1950) 76–7 on the Constitutional Debate as a critique of Pericles' monarchy goes too far: Gomme (1956) 194. On the broad range of associations elicited by the end of the *Histories*, see recently Boedeker (1988); Herington (1991a); Moles (1996) 271–7; Dewald (1997).

[81] Dewald (2002); earlier discussions: Waters (1971), (1972); Ferrill (1978); Flory

Tyranny takes on an additional detrimental dimension, when Greek tyrants maintain themselves only with Persian backing. Local despotism thus tends to draw in Persian imperial despotism—just as Greeks in Persian service or Greek refugees in Persia do not hesitate to subject fellow-Greeks to permanent Persian enslavement in order to satisfy their individual aspirations: the list is long and will find a sad continuation much later when individuals and communities compete for Persian support not least to attain domination over Greece.[82] Moreover, many of the traits which make up the 'despotic template' apply equally to Athens, the *polis tyrannos* that in its rule over its allies succeeds to and in several ways imitates the Persians. It is ominous, therefore, that Croesus' fall from the height of imperial power is explained by two necessities: he pays for the guilt of his ancestor, Gyges, who assumed power (tyranny) by unjust means (1.7–13, 91) and he suffers because of divine anger (*nemesis*), 'in all likelihood for thinking that he was the most fortunate man (*olbiōtatos*) in the world' (1.34). Both issues, applied to Athens, were thoroughly familiar to Herodotus' contemporaries.[83]

So much for foreshadowing of political issues in the Croesus *logos*. The depth of Herodotus' political thinking is perhaps gauged best in another passage. In several scenes at the Persian court, where the crown council meets to advise Xerxes on his decision to conquer Greece, he explores the deeper motives of Persian imperialism (7.5–18).[84] Among other reasons brought up by various interested parties (7.5–6, 8β, 9α), Xerxes emphasizes his obligation to prove himself and live up to the examples set by his ancestors (8α). He presents the subjection of Greece as merely the first step in a sweeping conquest of Europe that 'will make all lands into a single land' and 'Persian territory end only at the sky . . . And so the innocent

(1987) Ch. 4; Barcelò (1993) 149–77; Christ (1994); see also Stahl (1983) 211: Socles' speech as a didactic 'Beispielrede'. See Raaflaub (1989) 41–6, for the origin of the Constitutional Debate in the context of critical analyses of democracy.

[82] See above n. 74. On the treaties confirming the king's sovereignty over the Greeks in Asia, see Lewis (1977) 90–107. That this would be the price must have been clear to both sides much earlier than it appears from Thucydides. Hence Demaratus' categorical statement in 7.102.2 sounds hollow too. See also Alcibiades' cynical comments in Thuc. 8.46.3.

[83] Tyranny: Thuc. 2.63.2. Greatness and happiness: Hdt. 8.111; Thuc. 3.45.6; 7.69.2, and an allusion in 2.43.4; see also Raaflaub (1985) 241–4.

[84] See Evans (1991) Ch. 1; Raaflaub (2002a) with further bibliog; on the differences between Herodotus and Aeschylus, see Saïd (1981) as well as this volume (Ch. 6).

will bear the yoke of slavery along with those who have wronged us' (8γ). Mardonius carries this further: the Persians have enslaved many great peoples—not 'because they did us any wrong, but just because we wanted to increase our dominion' (9α). The Greeks will be no match for the Persians (9β). 'Anyway, we should leave nothing untried (*apeirēton*). Nothing comes of its own accord (*automaton*); people invariably get things as a result of their own efforts (*apo peirēs*)' (9γ).

Only Artabanus dares to dissent but his sane advice (10) provokes Xerxes' anger. He now sees his prestige at stake. Moreover, 'I am sure the Athenians will do something if we do not; to judge by their past moves, they will certainly mount an expedition against our country . . . It is impossible for either side to withdraw now . . . And in the end either all Persia will be in Greek hands, or all Greece will be in Persian hands; there is no middle ground in this war' (11). Xerxes later reconsiders (13) but a repeated dream forces him to change his mind again and Artabanus to consent (12, 14–8).[85] As the latter explains, of the two options available, one 'would increase our *hubris*, while the other would curb it, by pointing out how wrong it is to train the mind to be constantly seeking more than it has at the moment'; he did not want the king 'to choose the more treacherous one' (16α). He has 'often seen mighty powers brought low by inferior ones'. He knows 'what harm can come from excessive desire' (*pollōn epithumeein*) and is convinced that it would be best for the king to stay quiet (18, cf. 8α). But this does not seem to be the god's will.

All this is written from the hindsight of Herodotus' mature years. It anticipates Athenian control of the coast of Asia Minor after 479 and strikingly echoes ideas current in the time of the *Histories*' composition and highlighted in Thucydides.[86] In putting the alternative

[85] On this dream as 'une incarnation de la nécessité historique', see Saïd (1981) 22–5; as Herodotus' creation: Immerwahr (1954) 30–7; Bichler (1985) 140–7 (with bibliog.). Some of the arguments mentioned above have been introduced earlier: e.g., 6.134 (proving oneself); 5.105; 6.48, 94 (revenge as pretence for large-scale conquest); 1.207 (all or nothing). Some figure already in Aeschylus' *Persians*: e.g., conquest of the world (50, 65–7, 73–5, 85–92, 233–4); emulation of ancestors (753–8).

[86] E.g., always wanting more, being unable to stay quiet, leaving nothing untried: cf. Thuc. 1.70 with echoes in Euripides' *Suppliants* of the late 420s: Raaflaub (1989) 51–2; (1994). Pressure by ancestral example: e.g., Thuc. 2.36; Raaflaub (2001). Lack of knowledge about the target country, delusions, and false promises about an easy victory, use of a just pretext for an expedition that openly aims at large-scale conquest, and personal ambitions of the potential general: see Thuc. 6.1–26. Subjecting

starkly as 'either them or us', Herodotus seems to think of the polarization of Greece and the perception, typical of his time, that the great war between Sparta and Athens was a final contest in which the winner would take all. Moreover, all this contributes to a trenchant general characterization of imperialism as a political phenomenon. It is nourished by *pleonexia*, an insatiable desire for more. Based on previous successes and/or the achievements of previous generations, it puts relentless pressure on the ruler, blinds reason, and develops its own dynamics. It knows no limit, transcends physical and mental barriers, and aims ever further, regardless of profits or losses. Although sometimes using plausible justifications as pretexts, it is a justification in itself: conquest motivates further conquest. It is thoroughly unjust, the very essence of *hubris*, because it harms guilty and innocent alike. It ends only by overextension and strategic mistakes, engendered by the ruler's overconfidence and loss of critical judgment, which enable a weaker people to maximize their own specific resources and deal the conqueror a decisive blow.

The entire passage is a set piece on imperialism, comparable in form and intent to similar pieces on tyranny (above at n. 81) and to much better known Thucydidean examples, such as the Mytilenian, Melian, and Sicilian debates. Just when the last and greatest Persian imperial venture is about to begin, it summarizes and deepens the analysis presented through narrative and speeches in previous books.[87] It is complemented, for example, by the description of the Persian war council before the battle of Salamis which reveals further crucial flaws in Persian decision making (8.67–9), and by a series of discussions among the Greeks (most remarkably one at Gelon's court in Syracuse, dealing with the allies' request for assistance against the Persians) that illustrate the obstacles they face in pursuing a common purpose.[88]

guilty and innocents alike: see esp. Thuc. 5.94–7. Such correspondences have been noticed, e.g., by Cornford (1907) Ch. 12; Smart (1977) 251–2 (the latter suggesting an extremely late date for the work's composition); Rood (1999). For full discussion, see Raaflaub (2002a).

[87] See 7.20 on Xerxes' expedition as the greatest war ever; Dewald (2002) on the placement of such set pieces at moments of transition; Fornara (1971a) 87–8 on the generic nature of Xerxes' words in 7.8.

[88] 7.153, 157–65 (cf. 145, 148–52, 169–71); see Brunt (1993) 75–80. The real explanation of Gelon's unwillingness to help the Greeks (the Carthaginian threat) is mentioned as an alternative version (7.165), attributed to Sicilian sources, while no source is given for Gelon's alleged main reason: his refusal to share in the war

Persistent political foreshadowing and analysis, found in the two sections just examined and in many other passages, offer important clues to the reasons for Herodotus' interest in history and to his purpose in writing about it. Before he begins his historical narrative, he states programmatically: 'I will cover minor and major human cities equally, because most of those which were important in the past have diminished in significance by now, and those which were great in my own time were small in times past. I will mention both equally because I know that human happiness never remains long in the same place' (1.5, cf. 207). Here we hear the Greek historian who deals equally with empires, monarchs, and cities, but addresses audiences of Greek *polis*-citizens. He lets Solon emphasize that human life is fragile and one needs to await the end before passing final judgment on a person's happiness (1.32). Such comments define Herodotus' outlook: history consists of a sequence of rises and declines of great powers and powerful leaders; human happiness, success, and power are unstable and unlikely to last long; the higher a person or a state reach, the sooner will they fall; it is unjust and hubristic to overstep one's bounds, to rob others of their land and liberty; tyranny is innately bad and corrupts its holder; imperialism, because it is unjust and cannot be limited, will end in disaster.[89]

These lessons from the past are significant as lessons for the present and future. But which came first? Was it the past that sharpened Herodotus' awareness of the present or vice versa? Some scholars have suggested plausibly that concerns about political conditions and developments in his own time were crucial in turning Herodotus into an historian.[90] If so, his historical thinking (about past history)

without having a share in the command; on this, see Fornara (1971a) 82–4. Further scenes illustrating Greek decision making and obstacles to unity: 8.49, 56–63, 74–5, 78–82, 140–4. The difficulties of establishing 'defensive unity' among autonomous peoples are foreshadowed in the Scythian *logos* (4.118–19); see Hunter (1982) 185–90, 197, 212–8. On the Persian war council: Munson (1988) 95–8.

[89] See n. 12 above.

[90] Fornara (1971a) Ch. 3 (with discussion of earlier views), 86–91; Meier (1987) esp. 52–4. Meier (1978), (1980), (1986), (1987) discusses the origins of Herodotus' specific type of history. By contrast, Rood (1999) 166 acknowledges the validity of reading Herodotus' Persian War stories as political stories, but urges caution 'about all easy constructions of the origins of history-writing': 'what is not valid is to make Herodotus' story about Athenian imperialism his overriding message, the basis of his historical thought; that is, to make it central to our own stories about how he came to write history'. It is not clear to me why this should not be valid—and why easy.

was shaped *a priori* by his political reflection (about present conditions and problems); at the very least, both developed hand in hand. In his final evaluation which guided the final composition of his work, history of the past and political developments of the present formed a continuum, unfolding under the force of the same dynamics and propelled by the same basic human impulses: individual and communal self-interest prompting, on the one hand, the search for power that results in tyranny and imperialism and, on the other hand, a never-ending fight for liberty and self-assertion. Sadly, however, successful freedom fighters tend either to fall immediately under someone else's oppressive yoke (the Medes (1.95–6) or the Ionians) or to turn into imperialist and tyrannical oppressors themselves (Persia, Athens)—only to be corrupted by power and luxury and destroyed by the consequences of their *pleonexia*.

Herodotus probably felt quite passionately about all this. Occasional remarks reveal his distaste for war and Greek disunity (1.87; 7.9β; 8.3). We hear him speaking also through his warners, including Solon, and it seems likely that he describes his own predicament when he lets an anonymous Persian before the Battle of Plataea say: 'An event which has been decreed by the god cannot be averted by man, for no one is willing to believe even those who tell the truth . . . There's no more terrible pain a man can endure than to see clearly and be able to do nothing' (9.16).[91] Nor was he alone in being concerned about such issues. Many of them were discussed by one or the other of the sophists. Athenian comedians made bitter fun of them. Tyranny, never absent from comical satire even in Pericles' days, re-emerged as a topic of political polemic in Cleon's time and of public concern a decade later. It pervades tragedy, and the tragedians worried immensely as well about Athens' role as a *polis tyrannos*.[92] Yet one did not need to be in Athens to share such thoughts and worries. As suggested earlier, Herodotus drew on a large pool of political ideas that were shared by and developed in interaction among many

[91] Cf. Stambler (1982) 231. Solon: Chiasson (1986); Shapiro (1996) (with discussion of dissenting views); Moles (1996) 262–6, who also quotes (281 n. 26) a suggestion by Alan Griffiths that makes good sense of the story of Arion (1.23–24.6) 'as preparing the way for the wisdom figures who are to follow'.

[92] Tyranny: Berve (1967) 1.190–206, 2.625–30; McGlew (1993) Ch. 6; Henderson (2002); Seaford (2002); Raaflaub (2002b). *Polis tyrannos*: Raaflaub (1988c) 294–301; Rosenbloom (1995), (forthcoming). On Herodotus and tragedy: Saïd. this volume (Ch. 6).

intellectuals throughout the Greek world. His originality lies less in these ideas themselves than in his application of these ideas to history in order to organize it, explain it, and make it meaningful to his present audiences and future readers.

Naturally, objections can, and have been, raised against the type of interpretation presented here. I mention two of them. One concerns Herodotus' thinking of future readers. Charles Fornara emphasizes Thucydides' genius in creating a self-explanatory history which by itself would suffice to secure 'perfect comprehension of the important and universally relevant issues', while Herodotus constantly draws on the knowledge and expectations of his audience to achieve his dramatic effects. Hence 'Thucydides wrote for the future, Herodotus for his contemporaries'.[93] There is much truth in this but, surely, in presenting his *History* as a *ktēma es aiei*, Thucydides lets the future begin with the present: his observations and insights would be important for audiences at any time, including not least his contemporaries.[94] Unlike his importantly novel perspective of offering a work of timeless usefulness, however, concern with the present was familiar from performed poetry since Homer's days and did not need to be explained; it was taken for granted.[95] As for Herodotus, he too paid much attention to general truths that can be learned from history; hence future generations would profit as well. He need not have assumed that future audiences would lack familiarity with important events, posterior to those described in the *Histories*, which would allow them to appreciate the specific interpretation and dramatic effects he was artfully presenting. He wrote for a Panhellenic audience anyway, and the purposes he mentions explicitly at the beginning of his work are compatible with both present and future performance (or reading). Indeed, as Robert Connor suggests, we need to ask whether Herodotus 'does not treat his subject matter in a way that will make it contemporary not only to *him* but also to *us*, that is to readers of a recurring and indeterminate present'.

[93] Fornara (1971a) 59–61 and *passim* in chapter 4.

[94] This seems obvious, e.g., from 2.47.3, and all the more so if Thucydides too presented highly polished sections in oral recitations (Hornblower (1996a) 26–7; cf. Thomas (1992) 103–4). See also Badian (1993) 128: 'Thucydides, although aiming to leave a work for eternity, was in the first instance writing for a public (and, in particular, an educated Athenian public) of his own day.'

[95] See Raaflaub (1988b), (2000); for tragedy *id.* (1988c); see also Stahl (1987) 21 and below at n. 98.

Connor sees as one of the most important challenges to Herodotean scholars the study of 'Herodotus' techniques of breaking out of the immediacy of events and reaching an audience of unknown dimensions and circumstances'.[96]

The other objection concerns Herodotus' interaction with his contemporaries. Where Fornara recognizes at least the beginnings of a theory of history or 'historical philosophy' and an explication of 'laws of history', John Gould sees no more than metaphors, 'refined common sense', 'generalizations which permit contradiction and conflicting interpretations, but at the same time . . . appeal to the comfort of familiarity; in some measure they serve to produce a map of human experience. They are intelligible and they reassure'. Gould concludes that the 'most pervasive strand of explanation in Herodotus' narrative . . . is the sense that historical experience is the result of reciprocal action, the fulfilling of debts of gratitude and the taking of revenge'.[97] Here, I think, Gould, convinced that Herodotus remained rooted firmly in the craft and horizon of the storyteller, fails to perceive how far the historian ultimately transcends these traditional patterns of explaining history and how frightening rather than comforting, even if eerily familiar, the map of human experience is which he draws up through his work. Moreover, in denying the possibility that Herodotus writes at least in part in order to convey a message to his audiences, Gould seriously underestimates the importance of this very aspect in the centuries-old tradition of Greek performed poetry with which he otherwise links Herodotus.[98] Homer sings to preserve the *kleos* of great heroes of the past, but in interpreting their actions he raises troubling social and political issues that were familiar and meaningful to his audiences. This didactic purpose, implicit in the poet's way of shaping his narrative, is an indispensable part of the poet's craft and social function. Herodotus, I argue, extends this purpose, which perhaps lived in the tradition of prose story-

[96] Connor (1987) 258. Lateiner (1989) 5 n. 8 (p. 230) thinks of Herodotus as addressing primarily the future. See, e.g., 1.20; 9.16 on the importance of foreknowledge for making the right decision in the present (*proeidōs pros to pareon (bouleuesthai)*; reference by John Marincola). Here, too, Hunter's (1982) emphasis on Herodotus' focus on processes seems crucial.

[97] Gould (1989) 76–82; Fornara: see above n. 60.

[98] Gould (1989) 116–20 and *passim* esp. in Chs. 2 and 6; performed poetry: above n. 95.

telling as well, to his prose epic.[99] To put it in extreme terms: just as 'heroic epic is historical in appearance but contemporary in meaning', so too history is important less in and of itself than insofar as it is meaningful to the present. Herodotus differs from Thucydides in the emphasis he places on preserving the memory of the past but he agrees with Thucydides in recognizing the historian's obligation to the present and future: to educate his audiences and readers through his presentation and interpretation of history.[100]

In all this Herodotus appears both traditional and highly original. His originality is visible also in the relationship he establishes between history and ethnography. Scholars focussing on the mass of geographic and ethnographic material incorporated especially in the first half of his work have concluded that he began as a traditional Hecataeus-like scholar and ended up being a historian; the *Histories* would thus reflect two or more phases in his development, about which we *know* nothing but can derive much from carefully analysing his work. Yet in its extant form this work does not contain an ethnographic first and a historical second part. Rather, the presentation of ethnographic material saves from oblivion many memorable deeds and monuments of both Greeks and barbarians—one of the two intentions emphasized in the preamble—and it serves an explicitly historical purpose.[101]

Monuments document wealth and power; they are thus historically significant and justify extensive coverage (2.35, cf. 148–9; 3.60)—although, as Thucydides (1.10; cf. Hdt. 1.5) reminds us, perceptions can be deceptive. Comparison establishes contrasts and analogies which help bring out in sharper profile both general historical patterns and specific characteristics, especially of the Greeks. Herodotus uses both sides of this 'mirror' extensively.[102] He understands that

[99] A similar suggestion in Thomas (2000) 4.

[100] Quotation: Raaflaub (1997) 628. All this has, of course, considerable consequences for the question of truth and fiction in, and the historical source value of, this kind of historiography; see recently, e.g., Bichler (1985); Moles (1993), and the survey in Bichler and Rollinger (2000) 160–5.

[101] Thus, e.g., Stambler (1982) 212–7. See Jacoby (1913) 341 ff., esp. 353 ff., for a developmental or analytical, and Pohlenz (1937) for a unitarian view. For surveys of the scholarship on this question, see Cobet (1971) 4–42, 188–98; Hommel (1981) 272–7; for discussion, Fornara (1971a) Chs. 1–2 and *passim*. See Thomas (2000) 19–20 on the 'tyranny' of the idea of linear development, be it in literature or an author's intellectual progression.

[102] Hartog (1988); Darbo-Peschansky (1987); cf. Nippel (1990) 11–29; (1996) 170–2;

people act and react in specific ways not only because of immediate experiences but because they are conditioned by customs, cultural traditions, environment, and previous history. Without taking these aspects seriously, their contemporaries will not know how to deal with them, and the historian and his audiences will not be able to understand historical events. Despite Artabanus' warning (4.83), Darius ignores essential facts about the Scythians who have 'come up with the cleverest solution . . . to the single most important matter in human life . . . how to prevent anyone who attacks them from escaping, and how to avoid being caught unless they want to be detected' (4.46). In spite of Demaratus' explanation, Xerxes disregards crucial information about the Greeks' *aretē* and the role of *nomos* in Spartan society (7.101–5). Both kings fail not least because they are not interested in the *nomoi* of the peoples they try to conquer.[103]

Hence the more the audience knows about the lands, customs, cultures, and histories of the peoples that ended up forming the mighty Persian empire, the better will they understand the Persian accomplishment and the more will they be able to appreciate the greatest *thōma* of all: the Greek victory over all that might—for reasons and despite great obstacles which the (naturally much shorter) presentation of the history and customs of the culturally and politically multifaceted Greek world illuminates. Herodotus' concept thus differs both from the *periēgēsis*, where history forms but one component of the description of foreign lands, and from later historiography, where ethnography is usually confined to relatively brief digressions. Faced with the daunting task of making a war between two continents and two different worlds understandable, he finds ethnography, integrated into the structure of a historical narrative, indispensable.[104] Thucydides, writing about a war among Greeks,

on monuments as deeds, see Immerwahr (1960); Hornblower (1987) 30–3; (1991) 33–5.

[103] Cf. the Corinthians' efforts to explain to the Spartans what sorts of people the Athenians really are (Thuc. 1.70). In Xerxes' case, the Persians are misled, in addition, by their experiences with the Ionians (Evans (1991) 13–14). Xerxes dismisses Demaratus with benign laughter (7.105); on the meaning of laughter in Herodotus, see Flory (1978b); Lateiner (1989) 28.

[104] See generally Lateiner (1989) Ch. 7 and the acute observations of Stambler (1982) 215–17; this seems true even if Herodotus' ethnography is unsystematic (Redfield (1985) 97) and focuses on superlatives and extremes (Bloomer (1993)). On Herodotus' ethnography and the function of *nomos/nomoi* in his work, see recently Thomas (2000) Ch. 4; Bichler (2000); Munson (2001).

excluded most of these materials and created a purer genre of history that focussed almost exclusively on war and politics—thereby perhaps losing as much as he gained.[105]

Conclusion

I return now to the thesis that in many important respects Herodotus is much closer to Thucydides than is usually assumed. Of course, I am far from ignoring fundamental differences: among many other aspects, religion as well as an ethical and moral perspective are prominent in the former and almost suppressed in the latter; women play a much larger part in Herodotus' than in the single-sex world of Thucydides; the authorial 'I' is ubiquitous in Herodotus, structuring and validating his narrative, but almost completely absorbed into Thucydides' narrative; the two authors differ radically in dealing with the difficulties posed by their sources, and Herodotus uses a complex system of self-contained 'stories' (*logoi*) to construct his narrative in writing dramatic and artistic history, while Thucydides mostly presents a smooth, strictly chronological narrative in writing sober 'scientific' history.[106] Yet, despite these and other differences, the basic ideas and issues on which the two authors focus are similar.

For example, although Thucydides restricts his attention almost exclusively to politics and war, while Herodotus' conception of history is much broader, he too is deeply interested in political history, and war obviously is central to his work. To be sure, he recognizes the involvement of forces that lie beyond human control—fate or the divine—but these forces do not replace or override empirical and political causes.[107] In his view, history is determined largely by the decisions of individuals; to us this seems woefully inadequate but it is perhaps not that inappropriate for archaic Greek history with

[105] Hornblower (1987) 30–2.

[106] Religion: Hornblower (1987) 29–30; in Herodotus: see n. 32; in Thucydides: Marinatos (1981); Jordan (1986); Hornblower (1992a). Women: Hornblower (1987) 14; Gould (1989) 129–32; cf. Dewald (1981); Wiedemann (1983); Bichler and Rollinger (2000) 47–50, 99–105; Blok, this volume (Ch. 10). Authorial 'I': Dewald (1987) and this volume (Ch. 12); Marincola (1987). Relation to sources: Fowler (1996) 78–80, cf. 84, 86; Hornblower, this volume (Ch. 16); see also Müller (1981). Narrative: Cobet (1971); Gould (1989) 111. Dramatic vs. 'scientific' history: Fornara (1971a) 61 and *passim* in Ch. 4.

[107] Gould (1989) 67–81.

its multitude of autocrats, adventurers, and ambitious individuals, it applies even to Thucydides' work to a surprising degree, and it remained an excruciatingly influential factor in later periods.[108] Still, Herodotus' individuals and communities make *political* choices, duly if sometimes sarcastically noted by the historian: the Athenian polemarch before Marathon and the allied admiral before Salamis have it in their hands to save or enslave those who have put them in charge (6.109; 8.60α); the Ionian tyrants at the Danube bridge choose power in slavery (4.136–42) which the Spartan heralds refuse (7.135), and in rejecting their tyrant's offer of equality and freedom the elite Samians 'apparently did not want to be free' (3.142–3).[109] The processes by which Xerxes and the Greeks reach their decisions are complex, combining political and individual aspects. As discussed in the last section, Herodotus connects the history of the past with the political issues troubling the present and strongly emphasizes the most important political phenomena he sees as constants in history. He is aware of the political debates and theories of his time and uses some of them to interpret the past, embedding them in narrative and speeches rather than arguing with them overtly and abstractly.

Herodotus no less than Thucydides sees history dominated by the antithetical desires for liberty and power. The *nomos* of the Persian kings, always to expand and to leave nothing untried, clashes with the *nomos* of the Spartans, never to submit. These desires determine the historic conflict between Persia and the Greeks. They are complemented by a third and equally potent force driving people's actions: self-interest.[110] Individuals and communities constantly make decisions that serve their own ends but more often than not harm those of their communities and peoples. Through repetition and emphasis the historian helps us recognize patterns of typical behaviour, despite a high degree of individualization. These patterns reflect the theory of the sameness of human nature, so prominent in Thucydides, even if Herodotus never mentions this theory explicitly.

Like Thucydides, Herodotus too is critical of ideologies and pro-

[108] See, e.g., Strasburger (1954a); Herman (1987). Among the most troublesome consequences of this tendency is Herodotus' explanation of the Ionian Revolt: see, e.g., Forrest (1979); Murray (1988) esp. 463–4, 474; Walter (1993); Georges (2000) (with a strong defence of the plausibility of Herodotus' presentation).

[109] Evans (1991) 35–6.

[110] A motif emphasized, as Marincola points out to me, by Gyges' choice in the very first story of the *Histories*.

paganda. Again, he reveals this indirectly rather than directly, through juxtaposition, suggestion, and implication. Claims to fight a 'just war' are but useful pretexts; imperialism progresses with or without them. The Greek coalition spectacularly demonstrates its commitment to fighting for freedom but, if the Persians had been smart, they might have subverted it entirely by bribing the leaders (9.2, 41; cf. 8.4–5). The Spartans, if need be, would fight with axes for their liberty (7.135)—but mostly their own. The Athenians save Greece—as long as it serves their interests (8.3). *Isonomia*, 'the most beautiful word' (3.80), and *dēmokratia* are desirable—but one is imposed on the Ionians by a tyrant (5.37) and the Persians (6.43) to serve their own interests, and the other does not keep the Athenians from being fooled by a smart speaker (5.97). *Isēgoria* (equality of speech) has enabled the Athenians to rise to a new level of power (5.78)—but they stone to death one of their councillors who dares to dissent (9.5).[111] We meet a few truly admirable characters who act selflessly and justly (e.g., 3.138; 7.163–4); some rulers are not bent on expansion and are described positively,[112] and the Athenians, after all, did save Greece; but the naked truth is that people, whatever they say, follow only one impulse: that of self-interest.

The insights that guide Herodotus' interpretation could easily be (and occasionally almost are) formulated abstractly and theoretically. There is no equivalent to Thucydides' analysis of the *stasis* on Corcyra, but Herodotus uses speeches and dialogues to create analytical set pieces that highlight specific political issues (imperialism, tyranny, obstacles to Greek unity) and, although less dense and narrowly focussed, are quite comparable to those that have long been appreciated in Thucydides. The use of political thought to interpret history and demonstrate its immediacy and relevance for present and future is one of Herodotus' crucial contributions to creating a new genre of, as Christian Meier puts it, history as a 'multi-subjective, contingency-oriented' narrative of events that was—and remains—universally meaningful.[113]

[111] Despite 3.80 and 5.78, Herodotus does not think highly of democracy: see 3.81–2, 5.97 (with 1.59–60); see Strasburger (1955) 10–12; Fornara (1971a) 48–51; Edelmann (1975); Van der Veen (1996) Ch. 6. See also, more generally, Saxonhouse (1996). Forsdyke (1999) suggests, however, that the influence of democratic ideology might not be negligible.

[112] E.g., Tomyris (1.206), the king of the Ethiopians (3.21), and even Croesus in his early years (Immerwahr (1966) 155–8).

[113] Meier (1987) 44; see above n. 49.

Overall, perhaps, it is not very useful to think of Herodotus as the 'father of history' who was quickly overtaken and left far behind by Thucydides—although no one will deny that the latter created the model that was to dominate western historiography. A different perspective seems more promising. Despite the differences in their lifetimes and, accordingly, the dates by which their works received their final shape,[114] and despite undeniable differences which these works reveal in outlook, methodology, and narrative, it seems possible that Herodotus and Thucydides were, as Hornblower puts it, 'in a real sense contemporaries and rivals'.[115] They both interacted with a large group of intellectuals among their contemporaries who worked in a great variety of genres and disciplines;[116] like them, they both drew on a rich pool of ideas, theories, and concerns that were widely shared and discussed in their time, and they were both deeply intrigued by the challenge of discovering and conveying to their listeners and readers not only the course but also the meaning and continuing usefulness of history. What they did with this interest and with those ideas, theories, and concerns led them in different directions but along similar paths: although they wrote about different periods in different ways, to both of them history consisted largely of revolving patterns and processes, and it was essentially contemporary history.[117]

To give Herodotus the last word, at a juncture that might have changed the course of history, he lets the Corinthian Socles say: 'If you had experience of it, as we do, you would be able to offer better judgments about it than you do now' (5.92α).

[114] See above nn. 2 and 15. Correspondences between the debates at Xerxes' court and Thucydides' Sicilian Debate (6.1–26: above n. 86) need not be tied to 415; although Thucydides concentrates these arguments in this particular debate, they may have come up in earlier discussions about Athenian expeditions to Sicily, dating to 427–4 BC (see Raaflaub (2002a)). See also Moles (1996) 276 about why his (and my) view of Herodotus' purpose makes it difficult to date the *Histories* later than 415 or 414.

[115] Hornblower (1992b) 141; (1996a) 27. Hunter (1982) demonstrates this impressively, without ignoring differences (286–96). Lateiner (1989) Ch. 10 discusses 'The Failures and Success of Herodotus'.

[116] Hunter (1982) 287: 'the two historians worked within the same theoretical framework, on the same epistemological terrain'.

[117] Connor (1987) 257: Herodotus is 'writing contemporary history'. Efforts at comparing the two authors systematically need to be continued.

CHAPTER EIGHT

RELIGION IN HERODOTUS

Jon D. Mikalson

Although it is regularly ignored, dismissed, or disparaged by both ancient and modern historians, Herodotus explicitly offers also a religious explanation of the causes and outcome of the Persian invasions.[1] In 499 BC a small force of Greeks, including Athenians, attacked Sardis, a principal city of the Persian empire, and in the course of the attack they accidently burned down the sanctuary of the goddess Cybebe (5.101–102.1). When King Darius first heard of it, 'he took a bow, fitted an arrow to it, and shot the arrow into the sky. As he did, he prayed, "Zeus, grant me to take vengeance on the Athenians . . ."' (5.105). It was the burning of Cybebe's sanctuary that the Persians then used as an excuse for burning sanctuaries throughout the lands of hostile Greek cities for the next eighteen years (5.102.1; cf. 6.101.3 and 7.8.β).[2] These included, after the Ionian Revolt, Apollo's temple and oracle at Didyma, and the sanctuaries of *all* the revolting Ionian cities and islands of Asia Minor except Samos (6.19.3, 25, and 32). Later Datis on his way to Marathon in 490 burned the sanctuaries of Naxos and Eretria (6.96 and 101.3). And in the second invasion Xerxes destroyed the sanctuaries in twelve Phocian cities, including Apollo's oracle at Abae (8.32.2–33). Had he had his way, Xerxes would have had Delphi destroyed too (8.35–9). And, finally, with their occupation of Attica Xerxes and Mardonius fulfilled the vengeance demanded by Darius. They levelled and burned, so far as we know, all the sanctuaries of Athens and Attica (7.8.β and 140.3; 8.53.2 and 55; 9.13.2).

[1] Lateiner (1989) offers the most recent and systematic dismissal and disparagement of religious and supernatural causation in Herodotus' *Histories*. For more balanced treatments, see Harrison (2000b); Gould (1994); (1989); Lachenaud (1978); de Ste Croix (1977); de Romilly (1971b); and Immerwahr (1966). On the discussion of the 'tragic' aspects of Xerxes' invasion, see Saïd, this volume (Ch. 6, pp. 137 ff.).

[2] Diodorus (10.25.1) somewhat reformulates this point: 'The Persians learned the burning of sanctuaries from the Greeks. They were repaying the same *hubris* to those who had first wronged them'.

Herodotus has his Themistocles, surely not the least perceptive observer of Xerxes' invasion, directly link Xerxes' ultimate failure to these sacrileges. In the planning immediately after the victory in the Battle of Salamis, Themistocles tells his fellow Athenians, 'Not we but the gods and heroes accomplished this. They begrudged one man who was unholy and rash (*atasthalon*) to be king of Asia and Europe. He treated holy and profane things alike, burning and throwing to the ground the statues of the gods. He even whipped the sea and hurled leg irons into it' (8.109.3).[3] And, a few months later, the Athenians echoed these sentiments in their response to Mardonius' offer of alliance, 'We will attack him, trusting in the gods and heroes as our allies, the gods and heroes for whom Xerxes had no respect and whose buildings and statues he burned' (8.143.2).

The gods and heroes whom the Athenians and other Greeks trusted and who brought them victory over the Persians are those whose efforts and, in particular, whose dedications after the victories Herodotus records in his narrative of the invasions: Apollo of Delphi, Zeus of Olympia, Poseidon of Isthmia, Zeus Eleutherios of Plataea, Athena of Athens, Demeter Eleusinia of Plataea, Mycale, and Athens, Artemis Agrotera and Mounychia of Athens, and Artemis of Artemision. The heroes included the Athenian Ajax, the Aeginetan Aeacidae, and the Delphic Phylakos and Autonoös. These specific gods and heroes and the gods in general helped the Greeks defeat the invading Persians against overwhelming odds. As Herodotus tells it, the 'divine' and some gods, even Greek gods, may have helped Persians and their predecessors in earlier times (e.g., Croesus, 1.46–56.1, 85–91, and Cyrus, 1.124.1, 126.6, 209.4 and 9.122.2), but when the conflict became squarely between Persians and Greeks, the Greek divine world conceived of as a whole or in parts stood completely and solely behind the Greeks.[4] These gods and heroes helped the Greeks on land and at sea, by oracles and omens, and by personal appearances and apparitions. It was, in Herodotus' own judgment, the Athenians 'who gathered together all the rest of Greece and repulsed

[3] See also Fisher, this volume (Ch. 9, p. 223).

[4] Mardonius' consultations of Trophonius, Apollo at Abae and Ptoön, and Amphiaraus at Thebes apparently proved fruitless (8.133–6), and at Plataea he eventually disregarded his Greek seer (9.33–41). The Persian sacrifices to Thetis and the Nereids at Cape Sepias *may* have stopped the storm off Artemision (7.191.2). For the role of the Delphic oracle in the invasion of 480 BCE, see below.

King Xerxes', but they did so only 'second to the gods' (*meta ge theous*, 7.139.5).

There are some characteristically Greek features of this divine help. Only heroes, for example, appear themselves assisting the Greek soldiers in battle, like Phylakos and Autonoös at Delphi (8.38–39.1). Greek gods do not in Homeric fashion make an epiphany in battle (or anywhere else) in Herodotus' *Histories*, and the historian labels Pisistratus' self-serving attempt to stage a divine epiphany 'a very naive and silly action' (1.60.3–5). This distinction—heroes occasionally and personally participating in historical battles, gods never—is not peculiarly Herodotean. It is characteristic of prose accounts of these wars in and after the classical period.[5]

Secondly, divine participation is determined largely by locale. Herodotus' Athena, Demeter, and Artemis became involved in the Persian Wars because their own sanctuaries were in the field of combat. They are the Athena of Athens, the Demeter of Athens, Plataea, and Mycale, and the Artemis of Artemision and Athens. Had the conflict been played out elsewhere, in the Peloponnesus for example, we would find quite different deities involved, and all this is in accord with the local character of Greek religious cult. Recognition of the local concerns of the participating deities raises the question of motivation. Why, in Herodotus' view, did these gods support the Greeks and oppose the Persians? Herodotus, unlike Homer, does not probe divine motivation and nowhere gives an explicit answer, but, to judge from his narrative, it seems that these gods were interested primarily in protecting their own sanctuaries and punishing the Persians for the violation of those places. There is no indication that they 'were protecting' devoted worshippers or favouring Greeks because they were Greek. The heroes Phylakos and Autonoös chased the Persians from Delphi, the site of their sanctuaries. Protesilaus took vengeance on the Persian Artayctes for the desecration of his sanctuary (9.116–20), and, in Herodotus' view, Demeter Eleusinia of Plataea denied fighting and dying Persians admittance to her sanctuary because they had burned her sanctuary in Attica (9.65.2).

Only the panhellenic deities, deities already panhellenic *in cult*, participated beyond local and state boundaries. From the spoils of their great victory at Plataea the Greeks as a group 'set aside a tithe

[5] See, e.g., Dietrich (1986) 94–101 and Mikalson (1991) 21, 30–1, and 65.

for the god in Delphi and from this was dedicated the gold tripod on the bronze three-headed snake which stands near the altar. They set aside a portion also for the god in Olympia, and from it they dedicated a bronze Zeus, fifteen feet tall. And there was a portion for the god at the Isthmus, and from it came a ten and one-half foot bronze Poseidon' (9.81.1). Delphic Apollo, Zeus Olympios, and Isthmian Poseidon thus each received a major dedication, but each had a distinct role which reflects a complex blending of local and panhellenic cults and interests.

For the storms at Artemision and off Euboea that caused so much damage to the Persian fleet in 480 BC, the Delphians had prayed to and then no doubt credited the Anemoi ('Winds') of Thyia, as did the Athenians their Boreas and Oreithyia. But on this occasion the other Greeks as a group 'prayed and poured libations to Poseidon Soter . . . And from that time till now have named Poseidon "Soter"' (7.178, 189, and 192). Poseidon, by the very nature of his realm, transcends state boundaries, and here the non-Delphian, non-Athenian Greeks, engaged in naval warfare far from their homelands, naturally invoked and ultimately as a group rewarded the one Poseidon panhellenic in cult, the Poseidon of Isthmia.

Herodotus offers no clue in his *Histories* why Zeus of Olympia should be rewarded after the Greek victory. For that we must piece together accounts in Thucydides (2.71–74), Diodorus (11.29.1), and Plutarch (*Arist.* 19–21). On their way to Plataea, the Peloponnesian contingent of Greeks had vowed that 'if they won, the Greeks would celebrate together on that day each year the Eleutheria and would hold the agonistic games of Freedom (*eleutheria*) in Plataea'. After their victory the Greeks fulfilled their vow, founding a new panhellenic cult for Zeus Eleutherios with an altar, precinct, sacrifice, festival, and games.[6] This Zeus Eleutherios was surely a byform of Zeus Olympios, an aspect of Zeus which Herodotus himself elsewhere associates with 'political' freedom (3.142). The historical accounts, dedications, and later history of this new panhellenic cult suggest that it was primarily commemorative,[7] a new cult of a panhellenic deity at the site of a major victory.

[6] That a new cult of Zeus Eleutherios was founded at Plataea after the victory is widely accepted, but some see the panhellenic festival and games of the Eleutheria as a fourth or third century BC innovation. See Robertson (1986) 94–5 and Étienne and Piérart (1975) 55 and 63–8.

[7] See, e.g., Robertson (1986).

Herodotus gives Delphic Apollo pride of place among the three panhellenic gods for the victory over the Persians, with dedications from the battles of both Salamis and Plataea (8.121–2 and 9.81.1).[8] But Apollo's role in the history of the second invasion was complex. As a local god he powerfully and miraculously drove the Persians from his own sanctuary, 'protecting his own property' as he had assured the Delphians he could (8.35–9). But during the war his oracles deterred the Argives (7.148–50) and the Cretans (7.169–71) from joining the Greek effort, and his oracles nearly frightened the Athenians into abandoning the cause (7.139.6–144). These oracles raise occasional complaints from modern scholars, but viewed from the perspective of the cities which sought them, they might well have been realistic assessments that, had the war ended in the way most likely, could have saved needless suffering or even total destruction. On the positive side, before Artemision Herodotus' Delphic oracle urged prayers to various wind and sea gods, and these prayers were answered (7.178 and 189). The death of Leonidas fulfilled, in a way favourable to the Greek effort, a Delphic oracle (7.220.3–4). The Delphic oracles to Athens urged the strategically wise evacuation of Attica and, properly interpreted, suggested the strategy and place for the Battle of Salamis (7.139–44). And the oracle brought the lucky seer Teisamenus to Plataea (9.33–5) and set up Mardonius for disaster there (8.114).[9]

In hindsight we might, though Herodotus does not, fault Apollo's discouraging oracles. His defence of his own sanctuary might be imagined as a purely parochial effort. But that Apollo's role in the defeat of the Persians was much greater, that he in fact was the religious focal point of the Greek effort, is indicated by the oath which the allied Greeks took at an early stage in the invasion of 480 BC: 'Whichever Greeks give themselves up to the Persians, if they have not been forced and their situation is good, are to pay a tithe to the god in Delphi' (7.132.2). Here Herodotus singles out not Zeus of Olympia or Poseidon of the Isthmus but Apollo of Delphi as the deity to represent the Greek side. Only later, after the victories, did Apollo share this honour with Zeus of Olympia and Poseidon of Isthmia.

[8] For the dedications Delphic Apollo received after the Battle of Marathon, not recorded by Herodotus, see Paus. 10.10.1–2, 11.5, 18.1, 19.4 and *IG* I^3 1463B.

[9] Plutarch (*Arist.* 11.3–8) has the Delphic oracle designate the site of Plataea for battle and tell of the necessary vows and sacrifices.

Such are the general outlines and the major divine players in Herodotus' account of the Persian invasions. They may be dismissed by historians whose primary interests traditionally lie elsewhere, but to do so is to neglect a facet of the war Herodotus thought worthy of inclusion. And to assume that Greeks would in a religious vacuum face, prepare for, fight, win, and remember a war that threatened their very existence may be to misunderstand and oversimplify classical Greek society.

The texts of dedications made to the gods by the Greeks after their victory celebrate the bravery and accomplishments of the Greeks themselves, saying virtually nothing of the gods' roles and in no way claiming that the divinities simply 'gave' the Greeks victory.[10] In Herodotus' view the role of the gods was, it seems, to make it a 'fair fight'. In the Ionian Revolt the Phocaean general Dionysius promised the Ionians victory by default or battle if only 'the gods make it a fair fight' (6.11.3). At Marathon Miltiades was confident that the Athenians would win 'if the gods made it a fair fight' (6.109.5). The storm at Artemision and later off the coast of Euboea led Herodotus himself to conclude that 'everything was being done by the god to make the Persian force equal in size to the Greek and not much larger' (8.13). Given the massive superiority of their opponents in numbers, what Greeks needed from their gods was a fair fight. The Greeks themselves could handle the rest.

The *Histories*, of course, contain failures as well as successes, though, given the outcome, more failures for barbarians than for Greeks. According to Herodotus, many of these failures simply 'had' to happen. They were, in some undefined way, 'destined'. Things 'had' to turn out badly for the Lydian Candaules (1.8.2), for the Egyptian Apries (2.161.3), and for the Thracian Scyles (4.79.1). 'It was necessary' that the Naxians not be taken by Megabates' expedition in 499 BC (5.33.2), and that evils befall Xerxes' mistress and her family after the war (9.109.2). So too for Greeks. Evils 'had' to sprout up for Corinth from Eetion's family (5.92.δ.1), Demaratus' origins had to be revealed and he lose his kingship (6.64), Miltiades had to 'die not well' (6.135.3), and, most significantly, the Hellespont 'had to be yoked by a Persian man' (7.6.4) and all Attica become sub-

[10] E.g., Aeschines 3.116; Plut. *Them.* 8.2–3, *Arist.* 19.6, *Mor.* 870F and 873C; D. S. 11.14.4 and 33.2; and *IG* I^3 1463B.

ject to the Persians (8.53.1).[11] Why 'it was necessary' that all these things happen we are not told, but it is noteworthy that each event in its own context is a misfortune or disaster. That these evils 'had' to happen does not mean, of course, that all evils in the *Histories* 'had to happen'. Herodotus shares the inclination of most Greek authors to introduce necessity in some places and ignore it in others. He uses 'necessity' to explain evil in much the way that later Greeks used 'fortune' (*tuchē*).[12] Both reflect the Greeks' reluctance to hold gods of cult responsible for the various major and minor misfortunes of life.

But misfortune and even death might also be the punishment for impiety. In the view of Herodotus' Themistocles, as we have seen, Xerxes failed in his expedition because he burned and destroyed sanctuaries and statues of the gods. So too a group of Persians died for violating Poseidon's sanctuary at Potidaea (8.129), as did Artayctes for desecrating the sanctuary of Protesilaus, an episode featured in the closing pages of the *Histories* (9.116–21). Other impieties that Herodotus has explicitly punished are the maltreatment of priests (Cambyses, 3.29.2; Cleomenes, 6.81); violation of asylum (Aeginetans, 6.91; Cleomenes, 6.75.3 and 79–80; cf. 1.157–60); perjury (Glaucos, 6.86); violation of *xenia* (Alexander, 2.114 and 120; Spartans, 5.63.2, 90.1, and 91.2–3); killing of relatives (Cambyses, 3.65.5); and maltreatment of the dead (Cambyses, 3.16.2 and 37.1). The multiple impieties of the notoriously impious such as Cambyses (3.16, 25.3, 27–30, and 37–38.1) and Cleomenes (5.74–5; 6.75, 79–82, and 84) can be explained only as 'madness'. The crimes, the punishments, and the nature of impiety in Herodotus are all conventionally Greek.

For a few featured figures in his account, in particular Croesus, Xerxes, and Polycrates, Herodotus gives a richer, more dramatic explanation of their misfortunes.[13] He describes their behaviour in terms of *atasthalia*, *hubris*, and divine *phthonos*, concepts which are commonly found in epic, lyric, and early tragedy but are alien to the language of popular, cultic religion which Herodotus most commonly employs elsewhere.[14] Xerxes' signature impiety, for example, was the

[11] On these cases see Gould (1989) 68–74; Lloyd-Jones (1983) 67–8; and de Ste Croix (1977) 140–3.

[12] See Mikalson (1983) 59–62 and (1991) 18 and 22–8.

[13] See also the discussion of these stories by Saïd, this volume (Ch. 6).

[14] For the distinction between popular religion and 'poetic' religion as found in Athenian tragedy, see Mikalson (1991). See also Fisher, this volume (Ch. 9).

whipping, chaining, branding, and verbal abuse of the Hellespont after a storm destroyed his first bridge:

> A great storm came up and pounded to pieces and broke the bridge. When Xerxes heard of it, he thought it a terrible thing and ordered that the Hellespont receive 300 blows from a whip and that a pair of leg irons be cast into the sea. I have heard that he also sent tattooers to brand the Hellespont. And he ordered that, as they did the whipping, they were to say these barbaric and rash (*atasthala*) words: 'Bitter water, your master imposes on you this punishment because you treated him unjustly when you have suffered no injustice from him. King Xerxes will cross you whether you wish it or not. And justly no human being sacrifices to you because you are a foul and brackish river.' (7.34–35.2)

This is not simply another impiety, but an impiety of a different order and presented in a different manner from the impieties of burning sanctuaries and violating asylum. A key word is 'rash', an inadequate translation of *atasthala*, which suggests links to Themistocles' later characterization of Xerxes (*atasthalon*, 8.109.3 above) in reference to the same incident and, more broadly, to the Suitors of Homer's *Odyssey* (e.g., 23.67), to Hesiod's Titans (*Th.* 209), and, perhaps more immediately relevant, to the Xerxes and Persians of Aeschylus' *Persae* who are beset by *atē* and *hubris*.[15] Aeschylus' and Herodotus' versions of the incident at the Hellespont differ in important ways, but both make this critical event, the bridging of Europe and Asia and the first attempt by one man to rule both continents, into a condemnation of the man. Both treatments are powerful indictments of the impiety and irrationality of Xerxes, and both are framed in language and concepts of poetic literature, not of popular religious traditions. But for Herodotus *atasthalia, hubris*, and divine *phthonos*, like the 'necessity' discussed earlier, are not, as for Aeschylus, a theological matrix that structures the whole. Herodotus introduces them only for a few larger than life individuals to whom he wanted to give special treatment.

Herodotus' *Histories* is filled with oracles, omens, *manteis*, and dreams, and is the most comprehensive and best single source for Greek div-

[15] E.g., 96–100, 800–31, and 1005–7. For the link of *atasthalia* with *hubris* in Herodotus, see 3.80.3–4.

ination in the classical period.[16] His oracles, omens, *manteis*, and dreams are similar in that they give mortals information or at least indications of what lies in the future, but there are significant differences among them. Only oracles have a named divine agent, like that of Apollo of Delphi, who in his sanctuary through his cult officials and rituals gives predictions in his name. Prophecies from omens and dreams might be credited to 'the gods' or 'the divine' (e.g., 6.27.1–3, 7.12–18), but often involve no deity. For omens the location and circumstances might offer a clue (Demeter near Eleusis? 8.65) as might the form (Zeus for a lightning bolt? 4.79.2), but even here we, not Herodotus, make the connection. The different methods of divination also treat different topics, with only rare overlap. Oracles establish new cults and rituals (e.g., 1.167.1–2, 5.114), an activity Herodotus attributes to only one *mantis*, the legendary Melampus (2.49.2); oracles offer expiations and solutions for religious crimes (e.g., 1.19–22, 6.132–6), and only they can give detailed instructions that might shape a society or government (e.g., 1.65, 4.161). *Manteis* and omens give information primarily about results of planned and current activities (e.g., 8.64; 9.36–8), but oracles can command new action as well (e.g., 4.155.3–157, 7.139.6–144). Oracles, *manteis*, and omens usually give timely warnings that, if heeded, allow one to escape disaster,[17] but Herodotus' dreams seem rather to announce, literally or symbolically, an inescapable future (e.g., 1.34–45; 3.124–5).

Most importantly, virtually all oracles, omens, *manteis*, and dreams prove accurate.[18] Oracles in particular might appear misleading and be so initially, but in the most flagrant such cases Herodotus takes pains to have the recipients themselves ultimately acknowledge the oracle's correctness (e.g., 1.91.4–6, 6.76.1 and 80). Modern readers are, of course, disinclined to accept that the major Greek instruments of divination proved accurate on all occasions, and to explain their infallibility in the *Histories* most assume that Herodotus chose

[16] Harrison (2000b) 122–57, Crahay (1956), and Kirchberg (1965) treat specifically Herodotean oracles, and Frisch (1968) the dreams in the *Histories*. Individual Herodotean oracles are discussed in the fuller accounts of the Delphic oracle by Fontenrose (1978) and Parke and Wormell (1956).

[17] On the relationship of oracles to 'what has to happen' or 'what will happen' and on how individuals succeed or fail in their efforts in this regard, see Kirchberg (1965).

[18] Interpreters of oracles and dreams, whether Greek *chresmologoi* or Persian priests, however, are often in error. See, e.g., 1.128.2 and 7.142.3.

to record only the successful instances or shaped or created occasions of divination to make them appear successful. I myself do not accept that Herodotus created oracles or other instances of divination out of nothing, with no warrant from his sources. I rather think that the uniform success of divination may be owed to two mutually supportive trends: the first, that the traditions from which Herodotus drew—some emanating from oracular sanctuaries—tended to 'remember' better the successful cases or to reinterpret problematic incidents retrospectively;[19] and the second, that the poetic convention—most demonstrable in tragedy—[20]that oracles, omens, *manteis*, and dreams always give the truth has affected Herodotus' narrative art. Both trends would lead to the same result.

Since all oracles, omens, *manteis*, and dreams will prove true, those who ignore, forget, misinterpret, or reject them are, as in tragedy, from that moment marked for destruction and suffering. And this fundamentally poetic feature is one of Herodotus' favourite devices for foreshadowing and, in some instances, for explaining the suffering of his historical figures, whether it be Croesus (1.34–45) or Xerxes (7.37 and 57–58.1), Polycrates (3.124–5) or Hipparchus (5.55–6). It is then not surprising that in his account of the Greek victory over the Persians it is the Persians Xerxes and Mardonius who disregard or misinterpret 'signs' at critical moments (e.g., 7.37, 57–58.1; 8.114; 9.36–8, 41.4–43).

Herodotus occasionally delves into the early history of Greek religion, not systematically but in response to parallels he finds in foreign cultures. The details appear sporadically in the *Histories* but seem to derive from a single comprehensive and coherent view of the beginnings of Greek religion on mainland Greece. The pre-Greek Pelasgians there originally worshipped nameless gods through only sacrifice and prayer. These Pelasgians, with the encouragement of the oracle at Dodona, gave Egyptian names to their gods (2.50 and 52). On their arrival the Greeks took over these Pelasgian gods with Egyptian names and themselves enriched their repertoire of worship by adopting the Egyptian practices of giving to the gods altars, statues, temples, festivals, processions, and 'offering bringings' (*prosagō-*

[19] On the possible nature of these sources, see Evans (1991) 89–146.
[20] Mikalson (1991) 87–114, 129, 207–8.

gias) (2.4.2 and 58). The Greeks also imported from Egypt the occasional new deity or names for new deities, notably Dionysus (2.49, 145–6), Pan (2.145–6), and Heracles (2.43–4). And, just 400 years before Herodotus' own time, Hesiod and Homer 'created a divine genealogy for Greeks, gave epithets to the gods, distributed their "offices" and "crafts", and marked out their outward appearances' (2.53). Such is only the broadest outline of developments for which Herodotus offers numerous and varied arguments and important exceptions and nuances, but the outline shows that Herodotus accounts for, rightly or wrongly, major features of Greek religion as it was practised in his own time.

Herodotus' interest in religious topics, of course, ranges far beyond Greek religion. Standard features of his many ethnological surveys of non-Greek peoples are descriptions of the gods they worshipped, their major sanctuaries, and unusual cultic or burial practices, all usually noted because of their variance from the Greek. The Ethiopians at Meroe, for example, worshipped only Zeus and Dionysus (2.29.7), the Thracians only Dionysus, Artemis, and Ares (5.7). Herodotus lingers long on a description of the complex sanctuary of Zeus Belos at Babylon (1.181–3). He describes at some length the un-Greek practices of the Persians, that they 'do not have the custom of erecting statues and temples and altars. . . . They do not make altars or light fires when they intend to sacrifice, and they do not use libations, a flute, garlands, or barley-corns' (1.131–132.1). The Massagetai, he tells us, sacrificed and ate their elderly (1.216.2–3), and the Issedones ate all but the heads of their dead male relatives (4.26). For the Persians and the Egyptians it was unholy to cremate the dead. To the Persians fire was a god, and it was not just to give the corpse of a human being to a god. To the Egyptians fire was a living creature which would die if it consumed human flesh (3.16.3). Herodotus offers dozens of such religious practices of non-Greeks, but only rarely, as in our last example, puts them into the context of that society's system of religious beliefs.[21] This is particularly apparent in his long account (nearly 30 chapters) of the Egyptian gods, where he writes much of their names, their sanctuaries, and their festivals, but almost nothing of what the Egyptians believed their

[21] On this, see Gould (1994) and Burkert (1990).

gods did (in a cultic sense) or had done (in mythological terms). Herodotus warns us that this will be so in his account of Egypt (2.3.2 and 65.2), but it seems his general inclination, no doubt increased by difficulties of language and sources, when he deals with foreign peoples.

Herodotus likewise does not describe, *à la* Homer, the Greek gods 'in action', but that certainly should not lead us to conclude that he therefore thought the gods did not contribute to Greek life or to the Greek effort against the Persians. In his *Histories* Herodotus employed cultic rather than poetic thought, with prayers, vows, and sacrifices directed to the gods to achieve a given purpose, and, after that purpose was accomplished, with memorials and expressions of gratitude through dedications. With the exception of the occasional storm or phantom, the Greek worshipper and historian could not determine what specific actions the divinity had taken, but the success itself was the answer to prayers and sacrifices, and that success was then to be marked by a gift to the gods. It is this popular, cultic thought that can be traced throughout Herodotus' *Histories*, with, as we have seen, the occasional admixture of elements from the poetic tradition.

CHAPTER NINE

POPULAR MORALITY IN HERODOTUS

Nick Fisher

Introduction: Leotychides and Glaucus, Croesus and Solon

In Book Six, Herodotus describes how, shortly before Darius' invasion of mainland Greece, King Leotychides of Sparta sought to persuade the Athenians to surrender ten Aeginetan hostages whom he and the now disgraced King Cleomenes had left with them. His rhetorical strategy was to tell a story with a strong moral:[1] a Spartan called Glaucus, with an exceptional reputation for justice, agreed to hold on trust a large sum of money from a Milesian, but temporized when asked for its return by his sons, and enquired of Apollo's oracle at Delphi whether he might perjure himself in order to keep the money. The oracle responded that even if Glaucus himself profited from his perjury, his descendants would pay in the end. Glaucus immediately asked for forgiveness for even asking the question of the god, and returned the money; but the priestess' promise that it was too late was fulfilled. Glaucus had no descendant or hearth left in Sparta, and his family was wiped out root and branch, so that the moral was that 'it is good not even to contemplate any other course concerning an entrusted property (*parathēkē*) than to return it when it is demanded' (6.86).

A number of points arise from this characteristic example of Herodotean storytelling. Central to justice and good behaviour are keeping one's word, returning objects on trust, and not swearing falsely by the gods; a primary sanction for observance of moral principles was the fear of punishment from the gods, which might preserve its credibility by the argument that it often operated over a

[1] Herodotus is of course following Homeric models in employing this technique of argument by lengthy storytelling (see also de Jong, this volume, pp. 262–3). Its application to political debates would have already seemed archaic to Thucydides: see e.g., Gould (1989) 40–1. On Herodotus' moralizing use of Greek and Eastern folk-tale motifs, see esp. Aly (1921), Murray (1987), Pelling (1996), Griffiths (1999).

very long time-scale; and the Delphic oracle, as Apollo's mouthpiece, was thought to have a role in upholding such basic moral tenets.[2]

However, the impression the passage may give of a simple moralizing designed to have a straightforward effect on its hearers or readers is partially undermined by the broader context. The Athenians pay the story no attention, and the impression is given that they already regard it as an old-fashioned rhetorical strategy.[3] Herodotus does not comment here that the Athenians suffered later for their refusal to comply on grounds of political expediency in relation to their quarrel with Aegina; but, as we shall see, hints of such future problems for Athens do exist.[4] Herodotus has also, not long before, revealed that Leotychides was later to yield to temptation, more decisively than Glaucus, and was exiled after being discovered surrounded by bribes; his house was demolished (6.72).[5]

Herodotus' text is full of events, speeches, and narratorial comments which offer judgments in terms of generally accepted Greek moral principles, and of retribution delivered to those who offend against them.[6] The internal coherence of these principles, however, the inevitability with which Herodotus supposes they are upheld by divine powers, the extent to which human retaliation in response to moral outrage can be problematic in itself, and the importance of such moral ideas in his overall patterns of explanation, are all the subject of much debate among his modern interpreters. This chapter discusses a selection of cases which raise such general problems. I shall suggest that the historian is indeed centrally concerned to explore major issues such as divine punishment for injustice, excessive revenge or overconfidence in prosperity, or the contrast between tyrannical and luxurious Eastern Empires and leaner, freedom-loving Greek states; but that we do not find simple or consistent messages or contrasts, but rather a subtle and flexible set of interconnected

[2] On which see the minimalist account of Davies (1997); on the Glaucus story, also Immerwahr (1966) 213–15, Harrison (2000b) 117–19.

[3] See also Missiou (1998), arguing that the Athenians are presented consistently in Herodotus and Thucydides as less responsive to arguments from reciprocity.

[4] See esp. Immerwahr (1966) 214–18, Fornara (1971a) 80–6, Momigliano (1979) 148–9, Konstan (1987) 72–3, Raaflaub (1987), Moles (1996), Harrison (2000b) 117–18.

[5] On this further penalty, Connor (1985), esp. 199. Leotychides, like Cleomenes, is in Herodotus' view (6.84) paying the penalty for the manipulation of the deposition of Demaratus; see Boedeker (1987) 190–1.

[6] E.g., Pohlenz (1937) 91–5, Immerwahr (1966) 308–9.

themes, hints, and explanations, which are delivered variously in speeches, in narratorial comments, and by the thematic organization of his material.[7] I shall also occasionally consider the equally fascinating question of how far Herodotus is drawn by his ethnographic analyses of the moralities of other peoples to cast doubt on those of his own.

Very close to the start of the *Histories* is placed the enigmatic conversation between the Lydian King Croesus and the Athenian legal reformer and poet Solon (1.29–34).[8] The conversation establishes a number of basic values which resonate powerfully through the rest of the work.[9] The issue between Solon and Croesus concerns what it takes for human happiness; Solon rejects the idea that great wealth and prosperity (here called *eudaimoniē*) can be enough in themselves to call a man 'happy' (*olbios*). His primary reason is that life is unpredictable and changeable ('everything is chance'), and the divine is altogether jealous and disruptive (*phthoneron* and *tarakhōdes*); hence one cannot judge a man happy until he has died a good death, recognized by his community, while still enjoying moderate prosperity. This establishes at the start two fundamental themes which run through the work. First there is a contrast between the over-valuation of wealth, luxury, and power, which is associated above all, but not exclusively, with a succession of Eastern kings, and the toughness and austerity of other peoples, such as, for example, the Persians were originally, and the Greeks showed themselves still to be at the time of the Persian Wars. Second, there is a fundamental awareness, which is found throughout Greek literature from Homer onwards, of the uncertainty of human life and the unpredictability of the divine, and concomitantly, a persistent contrast between those whose

[7] For complexities of modes of suggestions and viewpoints in the *Histories*, see, e.g., Marincola (1987), Boedeker (1987), Dewald (1987), Gould (1989) 78–81.

[8] On the chronological problems and doubtful historicity of this conversation, see, e.g., Duplouy (1999). On Solon and Croesus, see also Chs. 6 and 7 in this volume. See also 1.27, 1.29 and 6.125 for other 'sophists' and aristocrats who allegedly visited the Lydian court, in these cases with an eye on its riches, thus subverting the contrast between Eastern wealth and Greek contentment with austerity: see, e.g., Konstan (1987) 70–2, Pelling (1997b) 4.

[9] On the Croesus-Solon meeting, and the figure of Solon as a 'Herodotean' wise man providing a philosophical and moral framework for much of the *Histories*, see e.g., Regenbogen (1961) 80–2, Lattimore (1939) 30–1, Immerwahr (1966) 154–61, Fornara (1971a) 18–21, Stahl (1975), Raaflaub (1987) 248, and the most recent discussions by Shapiro (1996) and Harrison (2000b) 38–41.

acts reveal this awareness, and those, especially the powerful, who come to grief in part through their failure to take this into account.

Principles of Community, Family and Sexual Morality

The Herodotean Solon's elaboration of lives to which he will ascribe the coveted label '*olbios*' reveals further fundamental moral values linked closely to traditional Greek thinking (not least, ideas to be found in what remains of the real Solon's poetry).[10] First place goes to the Athenian Tellus. He died gloriously in the most traditional sense, playing a decisive role in routing the enemy in a border war at Eleusis, and receiving a public burial and great honours.[11] Warfare for Herodotus, as for Homer, Aeschylus, or Thucydides, is presented ambivalently.[12] It often appears as a regrettable fact of life which no sane person would welcome. In his own voice, he commends the Athenian determination to value unity among the allies over disputes over the hegemony, as long as the main Persian threat continued, and adds the traditional moral that 'internal *stasis* is as much worse than war waged by a harmonious group as war is worse than peace' (8.2–3);[13] the start of the Ionian Revolt is signalled with the ominous, Homeric, remark that it was 'the beginning of evils for Greeks and barbarians' (5.97).[14] Croesus himself, after his defeat at Cyrus' hands, becomes more aware of the horrors of war, and denies, implausibly, his own responsibility for starting one: only fools start wars, in which fathers bury their sons (1.87).

But the opening of his *Histories* (1.1) also recalls the epic with the

[10] See esp. Chiasson (1986).

[11] Most probably Herodotus was referring to a battle at Eleusis in the war between Athens and neighbouring Megara (see e.g., Asheri *ad loc.*). Tellus' name seems to carry the implication of 'fulfilment', whether or not it was his real name; Immerwahr (1966) 156–7.

[12] On this, see Cobet (1986).

[13] On *stasis* in Herodotus, see also Fisher (2000) 103–6. Herodotus' next comment, on how the Athenians seized the opportunity to take the leadership of the Greek forces, which led directly to the Delian League, on the excuse of the alleged outrageous behaviour (*hubris*) of Pausanias the Regent, suggests his awareness of the charges brought against Athens of serious disruption of the Greek world after 479 (cf. also 6.98.2). See esp. Konstan (1987) 72–3, Raaflaub (1987) 237–9, Moles (1996), Pelling (1997b), with modifications in Gould (1989) 117–20.

[14] Homer, *Iliad* 5.63, 11.603, Cobet (1986) 7–8. See also Ch. 14, note 58 and Ch. 24 in this volume.

emphasis on the fame (*kleos*) through which the achievements of individuals and states deserve to be remembered; this fame for Herodotus as for Homer is won above all through warfare. In Herodotus' battle accounts, as in those in the *Iliad*, both heroism and brutality are strongly present.[15] The more egalitarian ideologies of hoplite and naval warfare may have restricted the presentation of individual deeds of exceptional valour, of dreadful horror, or other remarkable occurrences on the battlefield; but they are by no means excluded altogether.[16] The readiness to fight bravely and to die for one's community as part of Greek (male) ideology is a constant theme, as is Herodotus' interest in presenting his own and other people's characterizations of the collective courage or lack of it of different groups, both Greek and non-Greek. *Aretē*, the most general term in Greek for human goodness or virtue (and used in that broad sense e.g., at 1.134, 7.237),[17] is used in many instances (16) by Herodotus (as by many other authors) specifically of the military prowess or the display of bravery in war.[18]

Especially noteworthy is the contrast between two Persian debates: at 3.120, two Persian satraps Oroetes and Mitrobates had a violent argument 'contesting over *aretē*', in which Mitrobates questioned the other's claim to be in the lists of 'men', because he had failed to add to the king's possessions, and in particular had neglected to conquer the soft touch of the island of Samos. On the other hand after the battle of Artemision, the Persians learnt that the Greeks were celebrating the Olympic games, with their prizes of olive-leaf wreaths. Tritantaechmes, the son of Artabanus (Xerxes' cousin and the man

[15] For all this, see Gould (1989) 60–2, and Chs. 1 and 5 in this volume.

[16] See e.g., 6.114, 117 (Marathon), 7.180–2 (Artemision), 7.224–7 (Thermopylae), 8.92–5 (Salamis) and 9.64–75 (Plataea). In the last example, notice the minor details at 9.75 of the subsequent death ('proving himself a good man', *andra genomenon agathon*) of the great Athenian warrior Sophanes of Decelea, fighting as joint commander with Leagrus against the Edonians in Thrace (in the mid 460s? cf. Thuc. 1.100.3); he died 'fighting over the gold mines at Daton', which seems to be a further typically brief yet pointed allusion to the greed which the Athenians displayed immediately after the Persian invasions.

[17] Or even more broadly, e.g., of quality of textiles at 3.106, or of land at 4.198, 7.5, 8.144. See Immerwahr (1966) 309–10.

[18] See 1.176 (Lydians of Xanthus), 5.49 (Spartans), 7.102 (attributed by Demaratus, to Greeks generally, and especially Spartans), 7.154 (Gelon), 7.181 (Aeginetans), 7.225–6 (Spartans and Thespians), 8.1 (Plataeans), 8.92, 9.21, 9.28 (Tegeates), 9.40 (Persian and Mede cavalry), 9.70 and 71 (the skill and courage of the Athenians and the Spartans at Plataea).

who had advised Xerxes against the expedition, as stated at 7.82) expressed his surprise at their enemies, men who competed in such games 'not for money . . . but for *aretē*' (8.26). *Aretē* here seems to indicate both the prize—a honorific crown—offered at the games for the exercise of competitive skill and valour, and the valour itself, in that the implication of the admiration is that Greek free citizens and warriors will risk danger and even death for the sake of proving themselves real men.[19]

Elsewhere too there is a marked contrast between the Greeks' courage, stemming from their love of freedom, and the Persians and their subjects, rewarded by money or material gifts, and compelled to fight rather through fear of the King and the whip (e.g., the debate between Xerxes and Demaratus).[20] In fact, however, despite this ideology, great financial rewards as well as honours from their own cities were often available to the victors at the Panhellenic games, and athletic victors at the local city games could enjoy substantial prizes (see Young (1984)). Herodotus may well expect readers to take this point, as in many other instances he seems concerned to warn Greek readers by deconstructing over-easy contrasts between the peoples on these issues. More serious recognition that individual Greeks and (democratic) states could be strongly influenced by desire for money rather than honour and virtue may be seen in the consistent presentation of Themistocles (esp. 8.109–12, see also below p. 224), and the success Aristagoras achieved, in part by emphasizing the wealth to be gained, in inducing the Athenians to aid the Ionian revolt (5.95).

Tellus deserved to be called happy also because the continuity of his line was assured with flourishing sons and grandsons (as opposed to the uprooted hearth of Glaucus); the achievement of those whom Solon placed second in happiness, the Argive young men Cleobis and Biton, was to use their strength to satisfy their mother's wish to play her part in the festival of Hera, which led to their deaths.[21]

[19] See on this passage esp. Konstan (1987) 61–3, von Reden (1995) 98–9. On its connection with the third deceitful dream, of the olive crown, which encouraged Xerxes to take his decision, Köhnken (1988) 32–4.

[20] 7.101–4; 7.209–10, 7.234; on Persian use of the whip, also 3.16, 3.157, 7.22, 7.54, 7.56, 7.223. See e.g., Konstan (1987) 64–5, Lateiner (1987) 91–3.

[21] See on this example also Lloyd (1987) and Shapiro (1996) 351. They are placed second to Tellus, because their lives were less complete and they had no children; nonetheless they died a noble death just after demonstrating spectacularly an important element of *aretē*.

Honouring one's close family, and expecting good and grateful treatment in return, were principles held deeply by the Greeks as by most peoples; they are fully recognized in Herodotus' history, both in observing spectacular examples of good and (more usually) bad practice in stories of Greek and Eastern families, and in noting variations on these themes of family relationships, values, and structures in his ethnography.[22]

The death of one's first or favourite son is thus one of the worst tragedies which can befall one. Croesus' first punishment, apparently because of 'indignation' (*nemesis*) of the 'divine' at his confidence in his own prosperity (see below p. 218), was the loss of his only fit son Atys, killed by his friend Adrastus in the terrible hunting accident (1.34–8).[23] The story fits Greek tragic patterns all too neatly, and the names of the characters are also all too appropriate: Atys is first an ancient Lydian name (1.7), second recalls the doomed young god of the East, Atys or Attis, and third echoes the Greek concept (*atē*) which spans delusion, error, and disaster, while Adrastus recalls *Adrasteia*, a Greek term for the personification of Fate.[24] Hence it is generally agreed that Herodotus or his Greek sources have developed a moral tale according to established Greek mythical patterns, to emphasize the horror of the loss of Croesus' good son, even before he lost his kingdom.[25]

Attempts by grandees of the Persian empire to protect their sons

[22] See also in general on the closeness and tensions of father and son relationships, Dover (1974) 273–8, Blundell (1989) 40–2, and see also Herodotus 3.50.2, with van der Veen (1996) 24–5.

[23] On the story see Stahl (1975) and Konstan (1987) 64; as Konstan observes, Croesus' over-protective fear for his son shows an over-valuation of life as opposed to the display of *aretē*, contrary to the views of 'Solon'.

[24] This Adrastus was allegedly a descendant of Midas the famous king of Phrygia (1.35, 46); conceivably Herodotus hints at a long-standing guilt in this royal family, comparable to that begun in the Lydian house by Gyges (cf. also 1.14, another connection between Midas and Gyges), which might mitigate the apparent injustice somewhat here too. On the names, Immerwahr (1966) 157–8. On the theme of two sons, one fit, who is killed, and one defective, see also Harrison (2000b) 40–1.

[25] See also Fornara (1999) 34–6 and Ch. 6 in this volume. There is also the interesting case of Ameinocles of Magnesia (7.190); he became suddenly extremely rich by windfall discoveries of Persian treasure, but, like so many others in Herodotus, was not fortunate in all respects, because 'he too was affected by a distressing, unreciprocal, child-killing accident'. In this case at least, if the disaster was the result of divine envy or *nemesis*, there is no sign of any specific fault, but rather the idea that no mortal can expect or deserve uninterrupted good fortune—the disaster was explicitly *akharis*, not in recompense for anything. Does the 'too' here (*kai*) mean 'like Croesus'?

produced further disastrous consequences. Two doting fathers in successive generations each tried to save a son from the campaigns against Scythia and Greece respectively, to find each king, previously generous, respond with ruthless cruelty: Oeobazus' three sons had their throats cut on Darius' orders, and Xerxes had his army march through the divided halves of the eldest son of Pythius, son of Atys, of Lydia (4.84, 7.26–9, 38–40).[26] The second case has further associations, as this Pythius must be supposed to be Croesus' descendant, and hence the family was still gripped by disaster.[27] Other stories built on the closeness of the father-son relationship and the horrors of revenges which target it are the serving of Harpagos' children to him by Astyages (1.117–19) and the enforced emasculation imposed on the eunuch maker Panionius and his four sons by Hermotimus (8.104–6; see also below p. 215).

Equally dreadful might be the breakdown of relations between father and son.[28] Whatever historical basis may underlie the stories concerning the hostility between Periander of Corinth and his son has been radically transformed to fit mythical patterns and themes. The complex sequence of events involving these individuals, and Corinth's relations with Corcyra and Samos, was modelled on initiatory rites and cult practices; they also display an appropriate punishment for a brutal Greek tyrant, who was supposedly guilty of the murder of his wife and necrophilia with her body. He lost the love and support of his son,[29] and then, when he was about to be reconciled, saw him foully killed (3.44–53).[30]

As an ethnographer Herodotus is especially alive to the importance for social stability of arrangements for reproduction and the control of sexuality, and to the variety of means different communities have adopted for achieving this.[31] His sense of wonder at the alleged customs of the more 'savage' peoples of the Balkans, Central Asia, and North Africa, and his schematic exaggeration of such customs based

[26] Underlying this treatment may be a Persian purification ritual tradition: Evans (1988).

[27] On these assocations, see Lewis (1998).

[28] For such themes in tragedy, cf. Belfiore (2000) and Ch. 6 in this volume.

[29] As with Croesus, his other son was not an adequate replacement, being rather stupid (3.53).

[30] See Sourvinou-Inwood (1991) 244–84, Gould (1989) 51–3 and Chs. 5 and 6 in this volume.

[31] See esp. Hartog (1988), Rossellini and Saïd (1978), Redfield (1985), Cartledge (1990), and Ch. 20 in this volume.

on geographical distance from the Greek world, are naturally mapped against Greek norms; so is his portrayal of the exotic jealousies and brutalities at the courts of his Eastern kings. Such norms include monogamy, the protection of citizen women, legal penalties for those who disrupt marriages, and modified tolerance for the male use of prostitutes, courtesans, and, within certain restrictions, engagement in homosexual, especially pederastic, relationships.[32]

Herodotus' presentation of alternatives to these norms can nonetheless be remarkably diverse and open-minded.[33] Some more extreme cultures (at the geographical extremities) are apparently dismissed fairly rapidly for permitting (e.g.) random copulation in public like animals (1.203, 3.101, 4.180), but through most of the ethnographic sections, he is as often concerned to attempt to explain the coherence and regularity of the practices and their contribution to the overall stability of the people.[34] A good example is provided by his treatment of apparently bizarre customs of marriage auctions and sacred prostitution among the Babylonians.[35]

It is also notable how far Herodotus is from simple appeals to traditional Greek male fear of powerful women, individual or collective. The traditional representatives of female power, the Amazons, appear, but the story which develops, the origins of the Sauromatae from the amusingly described unions of fugitive Amazons and young Scythians, emphasizes how the resulting society achieved a harmonious combination of the two cultural traditions, and allows for the preservation of some degree of Amazonian female warrior customs (which may reflect some genuine features of Sarmatian culture).[36] Individual women, whether at the Persian court, in the Greek world, or even in 'savage' cultures, typically defend, often in devious or manipulative ways, the values of their different societies; and on occasions such powerful women can match men in brutal acts of sexual jealousy or revenge. Prime examples are the stories of Tomyris of the Massagetai (1.211–14), Pheretime of Cyrene (4.205, see below

[32] See, e.g., Dover (1974) 205–16, (1978) *passim*, Winkler (1990), Cohen (1991).
[33] Rosselini and Saïd (1978), Dewald (1981), Gould (1989) 129–32.
[34] Well argued by Redfield (1985), and see also Gould (1989) 95–109.
[35] On his treatment of these practices, Pembroke (1967), Beard and Henderson (1997), Kurke (1999) 227–46, Harrison (2000b) 216–17, and Chs. 20 and 21 in this volume.
[36] See Dewald (1981) 99–101, Gould (1989) 131, Lateiner (1985) 93–6; for archaeological evidence, Gerschevitch (1985), 185–99; see also Chs. 10 and 19 in this volume.

p. xx), and the passions and jealousies of Xerxes and his wife Amestris towards his brother Masistes, and his wife and daughter (9.108–13).[37]

Many other Eastern kings gave greater priority to the seizure of power, or a demonstration of its absolute nature, than to the demands of sexual morality and family ties. Two examples may be given. Candaules, the last Heraclid king of Lydia, 'who was destined to end badly' (1.8), brought about his downfall through excessive sexual love for his own wife, and the inappropriate need to have her beauty appreciated by his favourite Gyges (described as being contrary to what is proper, *ta kala*, and to *nomos*). His wife's strong sense of shame (*aidōs*, *aiskhunē*) at being seen unveiled and naked by another man impelled her to seek revenge through murder; Herodotus comments that this sense of disgrace was even more typical of barbarian peoples than (by implication) Greeks, whose males at least exercised naked.[38] Gyges' readiness to acceed to the wife's desire for revenge and their joint seizure of power, would, according to the Delphic oracle, lead to retribution falling on his descendants in the fifth generation (1.13, 91). Astyages' preparedness to have his daughter married to a man of a lesser ethnic group, and then, more dreadfully, to have her son, his grandson Cyrus killed rather than see him succeed to his imperial position, has as its apparently natural consequence a yet fouler deed against the values of family feeling and succession; and retribution followed, as his act of revenge against Harpagus in serving up his son to him at a feast met with retaliation when Harpagus inspired Cyrus to lead the Persians in revolt (1.107–30).[39]

[37] On the Masistes story, see also Gould (1991) 10–11 and Chs. 10, pp. 230–1 and 13, pp. 310–13 in this volume; on the moral and political theme of the decline of the Persian monarchy, and its significant placing here, see Dewald (1997), esp. 68–70.

[38] On *aidōs*, see above all Cairns (1993), and on this passage Gould (1980) 53–4, Kilmer (1993) 161–2, and Cairns (1996). There is another case of women's shame in relation to exposure of their own bodies at 3.133. On the thematic connections linking the stories of Candaules' and Masistes' wives, and their contribution to the complex modes of closure of the work, see also Wolff (1964), Herington (1991a) 152–3, and below, pp. 215–16.

[39] Recent analyses of this episode in van der Veen (1996) Ch. 3 and Pelling (1996), though van der Veen undervalues the importance in such standard folktales of the failure to kill babies fated to become kings or leaders, because of the natural difficulty even tough men find in killing smiling babies; on these motifs (found in 5.92, as well as in many other traditions), see Binder (1964), Lewis (1980) and Asheri (1988) on 1.113.

Helping Friends and Harming Enemies: Reciprocity and Revenge

In addition to the obligations, emotions, and conflicts inherent in family relations across cultures, Herodotus builds the reciprocal obligations of friends and guest-friends firmly into the structure of his narrative, where strong values of friendship and enmity are assumed throughout.[40] A standard view of many Greeks, which appears as the starting point of Plato's *Republic*, was that justice meant 'helping friends and harming enemies'. The term 'friends' (*philoi*) included kin, close personal friends (as in our commonest sense of the term), and more loosely perhaps fellow-members of social or political groups (at times including one's city or country) with whom one feels common identity and interests. Inside the community, *philoi* should aid and entertain each other, according to reciprocal rules of *kharis*, of reciprocal gift-giving and support. Where enmity exists, or replaces friendship, rules of 'negative reciprocity' or revenge take over. Outside the community elaborate protocols of hospitality and mutual gift-giving (Greek *xenia*, 'guest-' or 'ritualized-friendship') were available to form lasting co-operative relationships; as is clear from Homer onwards, a host who entertains a guest from abroad, and gives him presents, expects a lasting, possibly hereditary, reciprocal relationship to be established.[41] Many narratives in Herodotus play on the problems such relationships can present, especially where they become enmeshed in politics, whether what is involved is relations between individuals, between individuals and states, or between states.[42] What is of particular interest to Herodotus, as in Homer and Athenian tragedy, is the unstable boundary between legitimate and excessive forms of both generosity and revenge; where the protocols of such relationships

[40] On the importance of this theme, see especially Gould (1989) 82–5, (1991).

[41] See especially Blundell (1989), Mitchell (1997), Ch. 1. The story of Syloson and Darius is especially rich for the values and language of gifts and *kharis*; van der Veen (1995) 53–8, Kurke (1999) 122–5.

[42] On the political aspects of *xenia* or 'ritualized friendship', see above all Herman (1987). It is of course true that elites possess greater wealth than the rest, often in the form of splendid individual items such as bowls, goblets, or cloaks (which may be described as 'heirlooms', *keimēlia*, or objects of shining/symbolic value, *agalmata*); hence they will be able to engage in splendid acts of gift-exchange on their own or their state's behalf. But both Herman (1987) and Kurke (1999) err, it seems to me, in presenting the underlying values of gift-exchange and reciprocity as inherently elitist or aristocratic, and individual instances of conflict between such values and other ideals such as justice or humane restraint as necessarily a clash between elitist and 'middling' or democratic ideologies.

are left unclear (in Braund's term, 'undernegotiated'), or there are clashes of cultural traditions, a gruesome intensity of emotions and actions results.[43]

Greek tyrants regularly formed networks of guest-friendship alliances with fellow-tyrants and with aristocrats; such relationships are presented as equal and mutually supportive, but often with destructive consequences for their societies, though there is often disagreement over the degree of moral disapproval which may be found, explicitly or implicitly, in the accounts. The first Greek tyrant to be mentioned, Thrasybulus of Miletus, when under siege from Alyattes of Lydia, benefited from his close relation of *xenia* with Periander, son of Cypselus of Corinth (1.19–20); Periander passed on valuable inside information about a Delphic oracle given to Alyattes.[44] The more sinister side to the relationship is revealed in the Corinthian spokesman's later account of the terrible deeds of the dynasty (5.92). The transition to a much more brutal regime is there attributed to Thrasybulus' famous wordless advice to Periander's messenger, to lop off all the tallest ears of wheat;[45] the Corinthian tyrant's brutality then extended beyond the killings and banishing of the most powerful and threatening of his fellow-citizens to enforced confiscation of the clothes of all the city's women.[46] Other examples of such tyrannical *xeniai* include Peisistratus' useful friendship and alliance with Lygdamis of Naxos (1.61–4), which helped both to get established in power;[47] the friendship and marriage connections which brought together Anaxilaos of Rhegion, Terillus of Himera and

[43] Braund (1998).

[44] Gould (1989) 49, 55–6.

[45] Periander may be seen here as usurping the practice of the gods in attacking the highest trees etc., as described by Artabanus (7.10.e), and this perhaps foreshadows his later troubles; van der Veen (1996) 82–3, Harrison (2000b) 57, 163.

[46] Waters (1971) 13–15, 18–20 observes that the Corinthian speaker Soclees, apparently condemning Periander, spends more time on the more exotic tales of ghosts, necrophilia and confiscation of women's clothes, and suggests that his selection of the material reflects Herodotus' interests in telling varied tales, not in expressing his anti-tyrannical bias; but variation and even some humour is nonetheless compatible with a general hostility in principle to tyranny's normal acts. See also van der Veen (1996) 81–2, emphasizing that in the necrophilia story Periander is treating free people as slaves, and in general on Herodotus' attitudes to tyrants, see Ferrill (1978), Lateiner (1984).

[47] Lygdamis supposedly also had a friendship with Polycrates (Polyaenus 1.23); similarly Theagenes the earlier tyrant of Megara had, according to Thuc. 1.126 (but not mentioned at Hdt. 5.71), encouraged his son-in-law Cylon in his attempt at a tyranny in Athens.

Hamilcar of Carthage and helped lead to turmoil and large-scale warfare (7.163–4);[48] and most famously the elaborate entertainments and contests offered by the tyrant Cleisthenes of Sicyon for the suitors of his daughter Agariste (6.126–31).

As Thrasybulus' advice suggests, relations of tyrants with the elite members of their own states are characterized by tensions, latent or active hostilities, and swift and violent transitions. As Otanes puts it in the 'Constitutional Debate' (3.80), the typical tyrant with his uncontrolled power is driven above all by *hubris* and *phthonos*[49] to 'possess every wickedness'; he commits the most serious offences, the overthrow of all ancestral laws and customs (*nomaia*), rapes of women, and executions without trial.[50] Friendships and intermarriage can swiftly be replaced by divorce, plots, exiles, and killings; this is excellently demonstrated by the complex relations between Peisistratus and his sons in Athens and other elite families such as the Alcmaeonidae (1.59–64, 5.66–7, 69–73, 6.121–31) and the linked families of Miltiades and Cimon (6.34–41, 6.103–4).

Similar motifs of hospitality, guest-friendship, power and conflict pervade the stories of Polycrates of Samos and the further catastrophes that affected that island after his murder (3.39–60, 120–7). Herodotus' versions may reflect in part the need for his Samian fellow-citizens, elite and non-elite, to blacken the name of the tyrant after his fall and to distance themselves; but together they form complex chains of events where many of those who choose to break the patterns of reciprocity and those who tried to act justly came alike to grief, often in unexpected ways.[51] Ambivalence surrounds Polycrates from the beginning of the narrative. After seizing power, initially he attempted to share power with his two brothers, but then, deciding that he preferred sole rule, he killed one brother and exiled the other, Syloson. Herodotus' selection of stories of Polycrates in power

[48] Their opponents, other Sicilian tyrants, Gelon of Gela and Syracuse and Theron of Acragas, also intermarried (see Asheri, *CAH* IV², 786).

[49] On human *phthonos* as a constant feature leading to disunity and preventing stable absolutism in human societies, see also 3.52, 7.236–7, 8.124–5, and Immerwahr (1966) 313–4.

[50] See, e.g., Ferrill (1978), Lateiner (1984), Fisher (1992) 346–9.

[51] The role of the unexpected, and the importance of waiting to see how events turn out in the end, are emphasised by van der Veen (1996) Ch. 6. The importance of the juxtapositions and interconnections of stories of the Greek tyrant and the Persian king in this book are analysed by (e.g.,) Immerwahr (1956–57), Kurke (1999) 101–29. See also Ch. 6 in this volume.

balances the proper and advantageous guest-friendship alliance, secured with lavish reciprocal gifts, with Amasis the king of Egypt,[52] against the calculatedly tyrannical and self-interested 'extension' (or perhaps in another sense 'inversion') of the rules of reciprocity which accompanied his successful career as a large-scale 'pirate': he plundered from everyone including his 'friends', on the argument that he would create more gratitude (*mallon kharidzesthai*) in a friend to whom he returned what he had taken than if he had never taken it in the first place (3.39.4).[53]

The sentiment sets the tone for some of the explanations offered for the Spartans' and Corinthians' decision to aid the Samian exiles, whom Polycrates had maliciously sent to aid Cambyses in his invasion of Egypt, and who had escaped. The Spartans claimed that they were anxious to avenge the theft of the mixing-bowl (*kratēr*) they had been sending to Croesus, and the corselet which Amasis had sent to them (3.47). Despite the chronological problems of which Herodotus seems at least partly aware (3.148), the implication seems to be that the first two thefts at least reflect Polycrates' plundering from his friends with serious consequences for his rule in the long run. The Corinthian grievance—Samian assistance to Corcyrean boys being exported to Alyattes of Lydia—seems more distanced by Herodotus from a direct connection with Polycrates' disdain for reciprocal rules.[54] In other ways too, Polycrates displays the ruthless brutality of the tyrant (e.g., 3.45); yet he is also seen in places as the lavish and generous ruler and holder of a splendid court (and patron of poets such as Anacreon, 3.121), and one who knows the etiquette

[52] See also Hdt. 2.182, where Amasis' *xenia* gifts to Polycrates, two wooden statues of himself, are mentioned.

[53] See Gould (1991) 7–8, 17–19, Kurke (1999) 102–4, though her claim is disputable that the emphasis on the breaches of the rules of *kharis* in these sequences suggest it was exclusively disgruntled Samian *aristocrats* who presented this picture of Polycrates' thalassocracy rather than a more general tradition. One should not take Theognis' word for it that non-elites (his *kakoi* and *deiloi*) had little understanding of or concern for the values of reciprocal favours: see van Wees (2000) especially 62–7.

[54] On this, see above, p. 211. Against Kurke (1999) 103, who sees this as another instance of 'violated exchange', one might observe that the sending of the boys was not a mere sending of a gift, but an act of savage revenge committed by Periander on the Corcyreans for their killing of his estranged son Lycophron, and that Herodotus feels the need for a further explanation for the Corinthians' continued resentment at the Samians. On the theme of the castration of Greek boys, see below, p. 215 on Hermotimus.

of reciprocity (*kharis*).[55] In the elaborate account of the rediscovery of his jettisoned ring in the body of the great fish, he treats the humble labouring fisherman with proper gratitude and respect (a double *kharis* is due for his gift and his words), and treats him to a dinner (including the fish?).[56]

After Polycrates' foreseen yet 'unworthy' end at Oroetes' hands (3.125),[57] other actors in relations between Samos and the Persians saw attempts to adhere to the values of the reciprocal gift and of justice founder in relation to the pressures of power and the needs of the major empire. Polycrates' exiled brother Syloson first found that a gratuitous and apparently foolish act of generosity led to opportunities for the recovery of his homeland and power; giving, rather than selling, a fine red cloak to a man (Darius) who at that time was merely a member of the Persian guard in Egypt, but who later became king. On being reminded of the gift the king offered Syloson as much gold and silver as he wished,[58] but instead he chose power in Samos, on condition (trying to avoid the crimes of his brother) that no Samian was killed or enslaved. But this plan foundered in a complex interplay with the attempt of Polycrates' steward and successor in Samos, Maeandrius, also a man with two brothers, to avoid Polycrates' tyrannical rule. His apparently genuine desire to be 'most

[55] On this complex portrait, see also Waters (1971) 28–9.

[56] Herodotus' Amasis acts in this narrative as the voice of 'Solonian' concern for a long-term view of 'success' and fear of the gods' disruptiveness through jealousy (*phthonos*); he does not link this fear to a moral distaste for Polycrates methods of gaining wealth and power, but it is possible to hold that Amasis is to be supposed to be alarmed—on both moral and prudential grounds—at the indiscriminate nature of Polycrates' greed (see also 3.122–3), likely to arouse opposition from gods and/or men, which it would not be appropriate to express to Polycrates in his letter. I would not follow Kurke (1999) 109–11 in seeing further reflections of aristocratic discourse, condemnatory of the tyrant, in Polycrates' readiness to acknowledge gratitude to the humble fisherman. Rather the scrupulously polite correctness of the tyrant's response underscored the irony of the alarming discovery of the gods' rejection of the voluntary sacrifice of the object of high value (which also helps to account for the high number of occurrences of terms of value and worth (*axios/a*).

[57] 'Unworthy of himself and his high thoughts' (*phronēmata*) may come as a surprise after the enumeration of Polycrates' greed, unscrupulousness, and brutality; it seems above all a response to his '*megaloprepeia*', that is the extent and greatness of his rule and its lasting memorials: see Fisher (1992) 361–3.

[58] Despite his general reputation as a 'huckster' (*kapēlos*), intent on establishing a coinage and maximizing his revenues, on which see Kurke (1999) 68–89, Herodotus' Darius like the other kings could also at times display extravagant generosity; though usually to those he hoped to bind to his service.

just' and to surrender power to some form of democracy and *isonomia*[59] collapsed, when aristocrats objected to his position of limited privilege, and he had them arrested. The apathetic people offered no effective support; one brother resorted to execution when Maeandrius fell ill, the other brother urged resistance when Syloson and the Persians under Otanes turned up. Otanes (who himself, by another twist of irony, had advocated 'democracy'; for the Persians at the 'Constitutional Debate', 3.80–2) took the city by ruthless force and made the Samians all 'equal' by the imposition of a 'dragnet' policy of extermination. So Syloson took control of an empty city until a genital disease and consequent dream persuaded Otanes to make amends for his ruthlessness by repopulating it. These stories, which may originate from varied types of sources among the Samians, among whom Herodotus clearly had many contacts,[60] have been recast into linked narratives which display many of the historian's characteristic preoccupations: his perception that the powerful usually failed to keep their relationships based on moral reciprocity free from the more political drive for wealth, power, and fame; his recognition of the impossibility for Greek states or their rulers to form friendships or alliances with Persian kings or their satraps without losing their freedom and often coming to unpleasant and unworthy ends; and his preference for identifying 'causal' connections between chains of aggressive or hubristic acts, revenge and further retaliation.[61]

Herodotus is as alive as many other Greek writers to the danger that revenges frequently become morally excessive, and that precise judgments on the moment of transition are very difficult. Three varied stories of such terrible revenges, with apparently contrasting morals, may be considered to conclude this section. At the end of Book Four (202–5), the Battiad queen Pheretime of Cyrene showed no mercy to the people of Barka for killing her son Arcesilaus III, when they were delivered into her hands by her allies the Persians.

[59] See, e.g., Mitchell (1975) 85–6, Shipley (1981) 103–5, Roisman (1985).

[60] Against the view that all his sources were aristocrats, as argued by Mitchell (1975) 75–9, Kurke (1999) 122–9, seeks—but perhaps over-precisely—to distinguish aristocratic and more middling versions, e.g., those which present Maeandrius and his attempt at *isonomia* with some favour. See also Ch. 23 in this volume.

[61] On the weight given by Herodotus to retaliation and revenge in his explanations of wars and conflicts, see the minimizing account in de Romilly (1971b), (1977) and, rightly taking them more seriously, Gould (1989) 43–4, 82–5 and Lendon (2000) esp. 1–3, 13–18. There are 69 instances of *timōria*—words in the text. See also Ch. 6, p. 121 in this volume.

She impaled the men most involved in the murder on stakes round the wall, added the breasts of their wives, and let the Persian army pillage and enslave the rest. Subsequently she died foully, consumed by worms, and Herodotus' explanatory comment is that 'for men excessively powerful revenges are causes of envy (*epiphthonoi*) among the gods', the only case where he endorses in his own voice the idea of divine *phthonos*, apparently in a moralized form.[62]

Next, what Herodotus calls the 'greatest revenge for a man wronged of all those we know of' was achieved by Hermotimus of Pedasos on Panionius of Chios (8.104–6). Panionius, a slave-trader who specialized in castrating attractive boys and selling them as eunuchs, eventually fell into the power of one of his victims, when Hermotimus had risen to the post of Xerxes' chief eunuch. The revenge was that Panionius was forced to cut off the genitals of his four sons, who then did the same to him. The story is told in a way which invites us to agree with Hermotimus that the gods have worked to deliver Panionius into his hands, and that this, like the result of the Trojan War, is a case where (as Herodotus himself emphasizes) the gods have engineered it that 'great injustices meet great revenges' (2.120).[63] The revenge itself, however, is described only with the more ambiguous term 'greatest' (*megistos*), and no further recompense affects Hermotimus; the reader is apparently left free to see this either as an appropriate, albeit horrifying, form of divinely backed retribution, or as another case where the revenge, again involving mutilation, is itself 'excessive', and the question of subsequent punishment is left open.[64]

Finally, the last event of Greek-Persian conflict in the *Histories* (just after the story of the excessive, also mutilatory, revenges of Xerxes and his wife on Masistes and his wife) is the capture of Sestus, and

[62] On mutilations in Herodotus, see also Lateiner (1987) 92–3. It is possible that the point is that the gods feel *phthonos* here because they reserve excessive vengeance to themselves: so e.g., Mossman (1995) 174–6. But one might think that the emphasis on the brutality of the impalings suggests rather the gods too are here supposed to be applying a moral judgment on the excessive acts, as Immerwahr (1966) 313, Harrison (2000b) 111.

[63] See e.g., Vandiver (1991) 130, 227, Harrison (2000b) 108–10; other cases include 1.118–29, 3.49–53, 7.137, and esp. 5.55, the dream which, fruitlessly, appeared to Hipparchus before his death, warning him that 'no mortal does not pay the retribution for his unjust deeds'.

[64] See e.g., Lateiner (1985) 99 (Herodotus 'does not disapprove'). Braund (1998) 166–7 and Lendon (2000) 18 see it as probably more problematic. Clearly excessive, yet not directly linked to retaliation, is the story of Xerxes' and Amestris' killings and mutilations, 9.108–13.

the astonishingly rich and ambiguous closing narrative here includes appropriate punishments or revenges meted out to two Persians (9.114–22). One, another Oeobazus,[65] who had stored the cables used to bridge the Hellespont, escaped, only to be ritually sacrificed by some Thracians, and the cables were recovered, to be dedicated back at Athens. The other, the devious, greedy, and sacrilegious Persian governor of the Hellespont region, Artayctes, had appropriated for himself the wealth of the hero-shrine at Elaious of Protesilaus (the first Greek to die in the Trojan War), turned the sanctuary enclosure over to agriculture, and had sex with women in the inner sanctuary; he was captured and prominently crucified on a headland near the shrine, on the order of the Athenian commander Xanthippus (the father of Pericles), in order to satisfy the desire for appropriate revenge of the people of Elaious. These offences encapsulate many of the themes of excess which pervade Xerxes' expedition, the bridging of the Hellespont, the desecration of temples and sanctuaries, impalings of defeated enemies, and its relation to the Trojan War. The apparently random killing of Oeobazus gives a sense of an appropriately ironic divine punishment; but the crucifixion of Artayctes,[66] while it is not explicitly condemned (as Hermotimus' genital mutilations were not), carries the possibility that the Greeks, and specifically the new Athenian-led alliance, were themselves beginning to behave 'excessively'. The contrast is telling with the rejection by Pausanias after the battle of Plataea of the 'most impious' proposal made by Lampon, that Xerxes' uncharacteristic impaling of Leonidas' head be matched by the retaliatory impaling of Mardonius (7.238, 8.78–9).[67] Here, as in many other instances, Herodotus uses

[65] There seems no reason to suppose that this is the same Oeobazus whose sons were killed by Darius (4.83–4).

[66] The little story of the salt fish coming alive and jumping about on the coals, as interpreted by Artayctes (9.120), takes us back to Cyrus' fable, told to the Ionians when rejecting their belated offer of a settlement, that they had lost their chance to dance freely to his tune (1.141), and offers yet another form of appropriate closure, as the Ionians regained their freedom and took revenge: see Boedeker (1988) 40–1, Herington (1991a) 153, and Ceccarelli (1993).

[67] See esp. Bischoff (1932) 78–83, Boedeker (1988), Vandiver (1991) 223–7, Herington (1991a), Pelling (1998), Dewald (1998), Hartog (1999) 192. As Harrison points out, (2000b) 111, that the crucifixion was evidently a 'rational' decision taken by Xanthippus after consultation, need not exclude the idea that the gods had done their bit to bring this about, in a manner similar to Hermotimus' revenge, by delivering the wrongdoer to the victim.

traditional moral justifications and problematics concerning revenge both to bring out Persian and other barbarian cruelties and to question any easy confidence that Greeks were always their superiors.[68]

Pride, hubris, *aggression, and imperialism*

This brings us finally to the use of moral language in the discussion of the causes of these conflicts. Arguably the most debated area of 'popular morality' in Herodotus concerns its role in his analysis of the major decisions of the leading states and his complex categories of historical explanation.[69] In his opening sentences Herodotus makes it clear that he sees it as his business to explain why major conflicts start, and to record how cities as well as individuals rise and fall, fall and rise, in changing patterns of human mutability. The question for this final section is to assess the function, in his explanations of these patterns, of moral terms such as justice, reciprocity and truth-telling, revenge or retaliation (*tisis, timōria*), greed and grasp-ingness (*pleonēxia*), dishonouring aggression (*hubris*), and desire for empire, and finally over-confidence or pride (*mega phroneein* etc.). Many different categories or modes of explanation (not mutually exclusive, but not necessarily easily compatible either) have been plausibly identified as operating in his work;[70] while there is much disagreement, it is clear that in his text the moral, the religious and the political are constantly and inextricably intertwined.[71]

I have space to consider just two of the narratives of the leading Eastern kings, through whose wars with various Greek peoples the development of the main structure of the *Histories* is articulated. All

[68] See esp. Braund (1998).

[69] There are thus connections with these central themes of his work, considered in Chs. 7, 8, 14, 24 in this volume.

[70] Full and convenient discussions of Herodotean modes of explanation are provided by Lateiner (1989) Ch. 9, and Harrison (2000b) *passim*, though Lateiner is more concerned to argue that Herodotus does not need to, and does not in fact, choose between types of explanation, but is more interested in human modes, and Harrison that the religious explanations need to be taken very seriously (and see also Gould (1994)), but not seen as part of a coherent 'system' (as argued e.g., by Fornara (1999)).

[71] Many have seen parallels between the complexity of Herodotus' moral, religious, and political patterns and similar subtle patterns in Athenian tragedy, especially Sophocles: see, e.g., Lachenaud (1978) 498–500, Raaflaub (1987) 228, 247, Asheri Book I, xliv–xlv, Ostwald (1991), Fisher (1992) 347–8, and Ch. 6 in this volume.

the leading kings make mistakes of judgment, commit acts of brutality at the level of individual relationships, and engage in acts of imperialistic aggression against other states; throughout, issues of fate, and divine justice or jealousy, are prominent. Croesus, the first to commit injustice against Greek states (1.6), is appropriately the first complex case. His overvaluation of his own prosperity, and failure to realize that, in Solon's words, the divine was a 'jealous and disruptive thing' (*phthoneron* and *tarakhōdes*), aroused, Herodotus thinks it probable (*hōs eikasai*),[72] the 'indignation' (*nemesis*) of 'a god' (1.34) which then apparently took the form of the coincidental yet tragically appropriate circumstances of the 'accidental' killing of his son Atys by his suppliant and guest-friend Adrastus.[73] Croesus' failure to understand the changeable conditions of human life should not, in my view, be seen as a serious religious offence (like, say, destroying temples or bridging the Hellespont), nor is there sufficient reason to label it, as so many have, *hubris*, as it did not involve either an intention to insult or shame, nor had that as its effect.[74] The 'divinity's' response hence seems, initially at least, disproportionate to any 'offence' the mortal may have given by expressing the view that he was the most fortunate of men, however that is labelled.[75]

The following narrative, however, presents Croesus' decision and preparations for a pre-emptive strike against Cyrus' new Persian empire. His motives were varied: originally the aim was to stop the growing power of Persia (1.46), then expanded to imperialism, the 'desire for land, to acquire more in addition to his own share', confidence in the Delphic oracle (based on a misunderstanding of which 'empire' he would destroy), and a desire to avenge his brother-in-law and former ally Astyages (1.73). Here a similar overconfidence

[72] On this phrase, see Gould (1994) 95.

[73] On the reciprocal gift-giving and its dangers in this story, see Gould (1991) 8–9.

[74] Those who call it *hubris* have included Regenbogen (1961) 80–2 (= 1962, 84–6), de Romilly (1971b) 315, Stahl (1975) 5; for the contrary view, see Gould (1989) 79–80, Fisher (1992) 357–60. Contrary to much received opinion explicit connections between *nemesis* and *hubris* are not in fact very frequent in Greek literature.

[75] Cairns' response to my book on *Hybris* (1992) suggests, rightly, that there is felt to be an offence to the gods in so thinking one's prosperity could be lasting, as this fails to observe mortal limits, concludes cautiously, but still incorrectly in my view, that in such an offence 'all the signs of *hubris* are there' ((1996) 18–19). But if it could be construed as a form of insult to the gods in general, it would be one committed in foolish ignorance rather than wilful insolence; thus in my view not 'all' the signs of *hubris* are present, as the offence lacks the necessary intent to insult.

in his success, his over-valuation of wealth, and his reluctance to ask the more cautious questions,[76] combined with the explicit ambition for more empire, as well as a (less convincing) case for revenge, led to his starting the war; the initially successful moves included a unilateral crossing of the significant river-border of the Halys,[77] and the enslavement of the Syrians (1.76). The first Eastern imperialist king is thus shown—in more abstract terms—as clearly guilty of territorial greed (*pleonēxia*), and, at this stage, if not before, his desire for even more wealth and power can certainly be said to have become *hubris*, in the form of the aggressive crossing of boundaries and imposition of political slavery.[78]

The third element of moral explanation of Croesus' fall is revealed when Croesus, defeated and about to be burned on a pyre by Cyrus, won his release by shouting out enigmatically 'Solon' and persuading Cyrus of the Athenian sage's message of waiting for death, and respecting the mutability of all things. After swiftly demonstrating his value with his new 'wise adviser' status[79] by checking the excessive looting of the city of Sardis, he was granted the reward of asking the Delphic Apollo whether he was not ashamed to have deceived the man who had shown him so much honour, and not to have shown him *kharis* in return. The Pythia, the god's representative, carefully distinguished between the charges; she forbore from blaming Croesus for his recent aggression, and instead introduced the traditional idea of inherited guilt over generations, and thus justified his loss of the kingdom by the original crime of Gyges.[80] On the other hand, she claimed that the god had shown gratitude, which had consisted in his having delayed the disaster for three years, and Apollo was absolved of deceit by the ambiguity of the oracles; as before,

[76] On this, see esp. Christ (1994) 189–93.

[77] On the moral and religious significance of crossing rivers in Herodotus, see e.g., Immerwahr (1966) 162–7, 293–4, Flory (1987) 54–8, Fisher (1992) 352–60; excessive scepticism in Waters (1971) 51. The warnings given before the Battle of Plataea against crossing the Asopus river (9.36) seem to have been prominent in Simonides' elegy of the battle (*el.* 14), and something similar may be going on in Pind. *Paean* 2.73–5 in relation to a war between Abdera and the Paeonians.

[78] See esp. Stahl (1975), Raaflaub (1987) 241–4, Fisher (1992) 359–6.

[79] On this Herodotean role, Bischoff (1932), Lattimore (1939), Dewald (1985) 52–3, Raaflaub (1987) 242.

[80] On this idea elsewhere, cf. e.g., Solon 13 West, Theognis 731–52, Aesch. 750–81, and in Herodotus, see Fornara (1999) 40–2, Harrison (2000b) 112–13. On the idea of *kharis* between gods and men, and the defence of a god on a charge of ingratitude, see Parker (1998) esp. 114–15.

Croesus lacked the self-doubt to ask the right questions (1.86–91).[81] As he has already indicated (1.13), Herodotus accepted that the Heraclids achieved revenge (*tisis*) for Gyges' offence by this loss of the Lydian kingdom, but it may be left open whether he fully commits himself, or his audience, to the privileging of this long-term explanation over the other two reasons offered, Croesus' overconfidence and aggression, or the military reasons for Cyrus' victory.[82]

My second case is Xerxes' decision to invade mainland Greece, the most elaborately deployed, important, and over-determined decision in the *Histories*.[83] The invasion is seen first as retaliation, as the next escalation in the chain of retaliations between Persians (and before that Lydians) and Greeks. Darius had, in the immediate anger on hearing of Marathon, begun to plan his revenge, but delays because of his death, the succession problem, and the Egyptian revolt meant the new King had to take the decision afresh, and Herodotus built this up into a complex pattern of motives and divine impulsion. The ideas of revenge and retaliation (*timōria* and *tisis*) run strongly through Mardonius' and Xerxes' speeches (7.5, 7.8.b, 7.9.a), but overall a set of imperialist motives concerned with the desire for conquest and wider empires predominates. Mardonius and Xerxes are presented as more concerned to increase power and rule other peoples, whether they have deserved 'revenge' or 'punishment' or not (7.8.a, 7.8.c, 7.9.a); Mardonios had also his own personal motives (7.6).[84] All critics agree on the presence of different elements in the account, such as their associations of political subjection, contempt for other peoples and their gods, and the overconfident refusal to

[81] See Christ (1994) 189–93, and also Kurke (1999) 160–3, on a distinction between two types of discourse, to do with gift-exchange and with intellectual understanding.

[82] See Cobet (1986) 8–10, Gould (1989) 67–8, 121–2, Lateiner (1989) 208–9.

[83] On this passage, see also Ch. 7, pp. 174–6. Similar analyses are of course appropriate for the over-confidence, failure to take advice, aggressive acts, invasions, boundary-crossings, treacheries, and cruelties of other kings, especially Cyrus and Darius: see various accounts, e.g., for Cyrus, Lattimore (1939) 29, Immerwahr (1966) 165–7, Waters (1971), 51–2, Avery (1972), Flory (1987) 95–6, Raaflaub (1987) 244–5, Payen (1991), Fisher (1992) 352–7, Pelling (1996); for Darius, Immerwahr (1966) 169–76, Waters (1971) 58–64, Lateiner (1984) 260, Hartog (1988) 32–9, Fisher (1992) 382–4.

[84] On the significance of this emphasis on Persian admission of their committing of injustice in the pursuit of empire (with the possibility of implications for fifth-century Athenian imperialism), see e.g., Pohlenz (1937) 121–35, Raaflaub (1987) 228–9, 241–2.

recognize human limits, but there remain many disagreements on the appropriate use of Greek terms to describe them, on whether the focus is on the King's individual faults or on broader cultural traditions, and on the role Herodotus attributes to the divine.

The debated issue of how the loaded value term *hubris* is used in this prolonged debate takes in all these motifs. Elsewhere in Herodotus, the term is often used to denounce the intention behind individual verbal or physical insults, and most frequently it is used in claims by states seeking revenge to denounce the acts of aggression and humiliation of other states; in a more abstract political analysis, as we saw previously, it is one of the two main stimuli to the crimes committed by tyrants or kings (3.80).[85] It is used only twice in relation to Xerxes' expedition and only once in this section, in the second of Artabanus' explorations of why he holds the invasion of Greece to be dangerous. In the first, in the public debate, Artabanus responds to the ambitiously expansive and confident plans of Mardonius and Xerxes with his fears of a possible reverse, in part based on past Greek successes, and then more generally on the tendency of 'the god' to cut down the greatest buildings, the tallest trees and the greatest armies, because his envy (*phthonos*) does not allow anyone other than himself to show pride, *mega phroneein* (7.10e). Later, when alone with Xerxes, and agreeing to test out the allegedly divine dream, he said, referring back to the previous speech, 'what caused me pain was not so much hearing abuse from you, as that when there were two motions for action placed before the Persians, one of which was tending to increase *hubris* and the other to diminish it, by saying that it is a bad thing to teach the soul always to have more than what is in front of one, you chose the one likely to be more dangerous for yourself and the Persians' (7.16a–b). It has commonly been argued that the *hubris* in the second speech is essentially identical with the *mega phroneein* in the first, the over-confident pride which ignores the limits set to mankind by the gods.[86] In my view, what is being described in general in both these passages is the complex of drives and conquests which link together the Persians' past advances and their present ambitions, and include Xerxes' own aims

[85] See esp. Fisher (1992) 343–57 and (2000) 103–6; briefly Giraudeau (1984a) 73–7.

[86] E.g., Regenbogen (1961) 97–102, Pohlenz (1937) 125–9, Immerwahr (1966), 177–8, de Romilly (1977) 42–6, Dickie (1984) 104–9, Redfield (1985) 113.

and feelings, responding to the pressures to gain honour, wealth, and empire.[87] *Mega phroneein, hubris* and always wanting to have more than one has (evidently a periphrasis for *pleonēxia*)[88] are all ways of expressing aspects of imperialist aggression which might be offensive to the gods as well as to their human victims. But the three terms or phrases differ significantly in their rhetorical force, here as also in other comparable cases.

In the open debate, Artabanus' language offers only hints of moral offensiveness; terms like *mega phronein* are morally ambiguous, and the view that the gods in their envy (*phthonos*) choose to bring low the highest trees and the greatest powers is compatible either with the view that the gods dislike moral excess, and with the view expressed by Solon that they will not permit any mortal to match their levels of power. These ambiguities seem designed to protect Artabanus against retaliation by a shamed and angry Xerxes (as we have seen, many stories of often savage punishments indicate the need for such caution).[89] Alone later with the King, he puts his argument more bluntly and uses the stronger terms *hubris* and (in effect) *pleonēxia*, which carry the ideas of serious moral outrage as well as that of excessive overconfidence and pride. *Hubris*, I would argue, adds the idea of enslaving other peoples, and '*pleonēxia*' that of a relentless drive for imperial expansion, both placed in the context of the traditional patterns of imperialism found in all Persian reigns since that of Cyrus, and already acknowledged in the speeches of Mardonius and Xerxes. Thus these moral terms, and above all *hubris*, have as much to say about the effects of Persian expansion as on the presence of prosperity, pride and over-confidence in the Persians or their kings; the full statement of Artabanus' views suggest that the gods may object to both.[90]

The divinely sent dreams which forced the two to agree after all

[87] Most fully expressed in Fisher (1992) 368–74; Cairns (1996), esp. 13–22, takes partial issue with my views. In some respects our views are closer than he realizes, but differences remain.

[88] See e.g., Pohlenz (1937) 123, Raaflaub (1987) 229.

[89] See also e.g., Lateiner (1987) 92–3; on the atmosphere of fear at the court, also Pelling (1991) 130–6.

[90] This emphasis on Persian traditions rather than on individual error is given strong, though perhaps excessive, weight by Evans (1961), and also by Immerwahr (1966) 321–2, Gould (1989) 114–16, and Fisher (1992) 369–74. It compels a qualification to Momigliano's otherwise penetrating critique (1979; esp. 146–8) of Herodotus' allegedly over-personalized presentation of Persian motives.

to go ahead with the invasion seem best interpreted as an original Persian motif which have been profoundly modified to fit Greek patterns. The dreams of the noble figure insisting on the expedition are modelled above all on Zeus' false dream to Agamemnon in the second book of the *Iliad*; in view of the outcome, they should be read as a deliberate deception designed to compel the invasion, and hence a sign that the jealous 'divinity' had decided that Persian expansion and *hubris* should suffer another major reverse.[91] In this way, then, traditional moral beliefs concerning the connections between overconfidence and aggression are integrated with sophisticated political analysis of imperialistic traditions and of the pressures on successive kings, and then over-determined by the morally-grounded intervention of the divine;[92] the reader may thus conclude that Herodotus contemplates 'divine *phthonos*' as operating here in a more moralized way than he has Artabanus use it during the debate.[93]

The details of the expedition fully reinforce this picture. The moral language and the idea that divine assistance significantly helped the Greeks to win recur often. Xerxes' changes of mind, his occasional signs of caution, and his flashes of generosity, pity and humanity, do complicate the picture and present a more interesting figure in the framework of human uncertainty (7.13, 28–9, 44–7, 101–5).[94] But greater emphasis is placed on the king's arrogance, gratuitous cruelty and impiety. The narrative highlights the treatment of Pythius the Lydian (7.27–9, 38–40), the marking of the border-crossing by the bridging, and then the flogging, of the Hellespont (7.33–6, 53–6), the taming of Athos by means of the canal (7.22–6, 117–22), the burning of temples and shrines (8.32–9, 54–5), and the killing and impaling of defeated Greeks. (e.g., 7.238, 8.53–4). Hence Herodotus' own quiet statement that 'after the god' it was the Athenians who did most to defeat the Persians (7.139) is plausibly expanded by the two later passages, the explicit 'oracle of Bacis', whose truth is

[91] On these dreams, see van Lieshout (1970), Gärtner (1983), Fornara (1999) 36–7, 42–5, Harrison (2000b) 132–7, and especially on the third dream of the olive crown, Köhnken (1988). See also Chs. 5 and 6 in this volume.

[92] There is thus no need, as does e.g., de Romilly (1977) 42–6, to make a distinction between 'religious' (as here in Herodotus) and 'political' *hubris* (as in Thucydides).

[93] On this point I agree with Cairns (1996) 15, 18.

[94] See e.g., Immerwahr (1966) 181–3, Waters (1971), 75–9, Gould (1989) 133–4; and see also Sancisi, Ch. 25, in this volume.

endorsed by the historian (8.77), which predicted that at Salamis 'Justice will quench mighty Excess (*Koros*), the child of *Hubris*',[95] and by the moralized version of the envy of the gods which is presented powerfully by Themistocles, when discussing Greek strategy after Salamis (8.109): 'It was not we who achieved this, but the gods and the heroes, who were envious (*phthonein*) that one man should be king over Asia and Europe, a man who is impious and outrageous (*atasthalos*), who treated sacred and private things in the same way, burning and casting down the statues of the gods, and who actually lashed the sea and bound it with chains.' We may well suppose that Herodotus does endorse these judgments and this moralized version of divine *phthonos*, though without endorsing the politician's mock-modest understatement of the Greeks' own contribution. It is, of course, only another of this historian's cunning ironies that this neat summing up of Xerxes' moral punishment is delivered by the cleverest and most morally ambiguous of his Greek characters, who according to Herodotus was already planning a possible escape route to the court of this same impious and outrageous Xerxes, who constantly displayed his greed, and who was soon to play a leading role in the earliest stages of Athenian imperialism (8.112; cf. 8.3).[96] In this way, precisely where we may be confident that Herodotus is approving a moralizing judgment which explains the victory of the Greeks in terms of the imperialist aggression and blasphemy of their enemies, he offers the reader the hint that such moral and political contrasts are as subject to constant, yet unpredictable, change as are the prosperity or sufferings of individuals and the rise and fall of states (1.5, 1.32).[97]

[95] On which see Immerwahr (1966) 278–9, Darbo-Peschanski (1987) 79–83, Gould (1989) 122–5, Harrison (2000b) 130–2.

[96] See, e.g., Immerwahr (1966) 199–200, 223–5, Fornara (1971a) 66–74, Dewald (1985) 53, Konstan (1987) 70–3, Raaflaub (1987) 242, Gould (1989) 117–18.

[97] See especially Gould (1989) 76–82, Dewald (1998) 80–2.

CHAPTER TEN

WOMEN IN HERODOTUS' *HISTORIES*

Josine Blok

Introduction: the importance of women in the Histories

Herodotus' *Histories* offer the reader a view of a wide-ranging historical process which involved nearly the whole inhabited world. By situating the Greco-Persian war in this context, Herodotus conferred a special meaning on the immense conflict that still governed the actual political conditions of the eastern Mediterranean and deeply influenced the Greeks' perceptions of themselves and the world. Women play a salient role in the historical world as Herodotus portrays it. They partake in all activities that form the body of the *Histories*: they rule kingdoms, produce or nurture royal children, take vital decisions, found oracles, serve in simple jobs, fall victim to war, take revenge, and participate in warfare. Women perform some of these activities on a smaller scale than men, notably in the fields of politics and military action; in others they outdo the men's contribution, particularly when taking responsibility for religious observance and the preservation of social stability. In the words of John Gould,

> (. . .) what is most striking throughout is what I would call the visibility of women in the world as Herodotus presents it, and their often paramount role in determining what happens; this is in stark contrast to the way in which the public world of political action appears elsewhere in Greek literature. (Gould (1989) 130–1)

Women's participation in the narrated historical events is thoroughly intertwined with all other aspects of the *Histories*. Herodotus' work strikes the modern reader as holistic in the strong interdependence of its subject matter, sources, selection, synthesis, explanation, and presentation—the elements that constitute any major historical work. Among the much-debated questions evoked by the *Histories* and the craft of their author, there are few themes that are not in some way

connected with the role of women as a group with distinct functions in society, or with gender as a fundamental category of historical understanding.

The significance of women in the historical narrative of the *Histories* is often demonstrated by enumerating when and how women are mentioned, notably by contrast to Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War*. Dewald (1981: 92) notes 375 references to women in Herodotus (Cartledge (1993) 128 mentions 381), as against Lateiner's finding only six in Thucydides ((1989) 265; cf. Gould (1989) 129–30). These six are the only individual women who are mentioned by name;[1] Loraux counts about twenty instances where Thucydides mentions 'women and children' or other anonymous collectives that included women (Loraux (1995)). Of course, numbers reflect conceptions of history here. In writing the history of the Peloponnesian War, Thucydides bestowed upon war the quality of being—or revealing—the essence of history, simultaneously presenting this view as the objective truth (Loraux (1986a); Hornblower (1991^2) 59–66). As a consequence, he considered the more or less rational behaviour and decisions of those who were politically and strategically responsible to be the decisive factors in the historical process and hence the things really worth knowing. His approach inevitably produced a historiography in which women could not be expected to figure as historical agents. Instead they were conceived of as being subject to their feminine nature (*phusis*) which, by representing the vulnerable *oikos* side of the warring states, could only feature as a backdrop to what was historically significant (Loraux (1995); cf. Wiedemann (1983); Harvey (1985); Cartledge (1993)). Moreover, in dealing with a war that was fought among the Greeks themselves, Thucydides was not compelled to take into account cultural difference—one of the formative factors in Herodotus' historiography that induced the latter to recognize women as important agents.

However, the differences between their conceptions of history obviously cannot be reduced to the demands inherent in the subject matter of their respective works. Neither will it do to assume their

[1] The priestess of Argos, Chrysis, and her successor Phaeinis (2.2.1 and 4.133.2–3, both serving chronological purposes); Archedice and Myrrhine, the daughter and wife of Hippias (6.59.3, 55.1); the mythical Procne (2.29.3), and the savage Thracian Brauro, who took part in killing her husband, the Edonian king (4.107.3); see Lateiner (1989) 265.

thoroughly distinct social environments as an explanation of these differences.[2] Whatever the reasons for his particular standpoint, Herodotus presents a view of the world in which women played a central role in all cultural and social relations. Like Thucydides, he often mentions circumstances in which it was necessary for the men to bring 'the women and children' of a community into a state of safety,[3] but the context of the *Histories* gives a different meaning to the same kind of event. Herodotus never attributes the characteristics of people as a group to nature (*phusis*). Instead, his emphasis on *nomos* (a custom of such impact as to function as a natural law within a community) as the governing force in people's behaviour is articulated in an ethnography in which gender-relations, and women's activities in particular, are among the cardinal criteria of description and evaluation (Rossellini and Saïd (1978)). For instance, Herodotus indicates the topsy-turvy nature of the Egyptian world by observations to the effect that in Egypt the roles of men and women were exactly the reverse of those of the Greeks (2.35); and the successful resistance of the Scythians against the Persian kings is set against the background of their *nomoi*, a nomad way of life, while in the case of tribes such as the Massagetae and the Sauromatae the women are shown to be as valiant and independent as the men (1.205–16; 4.110–17).[4] Although he can only use Greek practices as a norm, often implicitly, his aim is clearly to demonstrate that what is considered normal varies from one society to another.

Women represent a kind of seismograph of the general condition of a civilization or society. They are essential indicators of normality (Lateiner (1989) 135, 140) and, consequently, of transgressions of that normality. The notion of normality includes a moral aspect and an idea of tradition; it refers to *nomos* in its practical and in its prescriptive sense. In the *Histories*, women who act in a positive way often defend the *nomos* against irresponsible transgressions by men,

[2] Fehling (1989) 243–5 thinks that Herodotus was not at all the upper-class figure he is usually taken to have been. I do not think that this argument is of any help in understanding the structure of the *Histories*; a dependence on different kinds of literary genre seems to be more to the point.

[3] E.g., 1.164; 3.45; 3.97; 4.121; 4.145.2; 4.202; 5.15; 5.98; 6.16; 6.19; 6.32; 6.137; 7.114.1; 8.33; 8.36; 8.40; 8.142; cf. Dewald (1981) 121.

[4] I have argued elsewhere that Herodotus uses the Greek myth of the Amazons to explain the *nomoi* of the Sauromatae, rather than to identify the Scythians as the origin of the Amazons, which is the usual interpretation of this passage (Blok (1995) 86–9). See also Ch. 9 in this volume.

as when Cyno the servant woman saves the royal child Cyrus from destruction by his own grandfather (1.110–13). Cyno's role in fact provides an example of Herodotus' tendency to illuminate important people and events by focussing on small and apparently insignificant ones (van der Veen (1996) 23–52). Conversely, women whose agency is destructive, or who are cast in a negative light, indicate that something is rotten in the society to which they belong (Pheretime fulfulling a long tradition of strife and murder in Cyrene and Barce, 4.160–2, 202–5, and the unpredictable power of the Persian queens, a component of dynastic autocracy; cf. Lateiner (1989) 139). The individuals who take fundamental decisions in the *Histories* are situated within this cultural context, moulded by Herodotus' understanding of it.

This assessment of the historical perspective created in the *Histories* forms one strand of this essay. The published contributions that I shall discuss are mainly those that take this structural coherence of Herodotus' historiography as a starting point. My aim is to elucidate what the analysis of women's role in Herodotus' work has contributed to our understanding of the *Histories*. The debate on the relationship between narrative and historical 'reality' in the *Histories*, which seems to have become the overarching question in Herodotean scholarship,[5] has been stimulated by discussions on the representations of women. Among the factors contributing to this interest are Herodotus' stories about the power and sexual freedom of women in faraway societies. These stories have fanned the imagination of readers from antiquity to the present, but, simultaneously, they have recurrently evoked doubts, and hence questions, about the truth of it all. Since Herodotus' account of Babylon—the Babylonian queens Semiramis and Nitocris (1.184–5), and the practice in the same city of selling and prostituting the daughters of citizens (1.196)—is clearly unreliable,[6] why should one believe his narrative about the battle of Salamis?[7] Another such factor is the discrepancy between Herodotus'

[5] In the *Arethusa* volume on Herodotus (1987), the emphasis has shifted almost entirely towards the narrative side of the *Histories*. The contributors to the volume discuss specific episodes using cautionary phrases such as 'whatever may really have happened, Herodotus tells that . . .'. Yet any assessment of *historical* narrative is ultimately concerned with a narrative *about* something, an assumption which is implicitly taken for granted in much of the *Arethusa* volume.

[6] Rollinger (1993); Beard and Henderson (1997); from a different point of view Lloyd (1976) 289–91.

[7] See also Ch. 15 in this volume.

views on women's prominence and what is generally considered to have been the more common practice in Greece at the time, as noted by Gould. What made Herodotus describe the world so differently from his contemporaries? And what exactly is it that is different? An assessment of the range of positions taken by scholars on questions dealing with narration and historical process therefore forms the second strand of this chapter.

Approaching the theme: fact and fiction in the Histories

Since there is 'no single formula which covers the role of women in Herodotus' (Gould (1989) 130), there is no single interpretative framework which may accommodate all, or most, scholarly work on the subject. The various approaches rather reflect the problems raised by the character of Herodotus' work itself. The *Histories* seem to me to pose an extreme case of a generic question about all historical writing: how are we to understand the relationship between historiography as narration and the events it claims to describe and explain? This question is both more intractable and more important than might appear at first glance. For instance, when distinguishing the elements that together make up the *Histories*, Immerwahr concludes that 'historical knowledge in Herodotus moves on three levels: events, traditions about events, and the historical work which interprets these traditions' (Immerwahr (1966) 6). This analysis gives a fine insight into the way a reader experiences Herodotus' text, but the underlying problem surfaces again in the choice of priority. Either one proceeds from the 'historical events and the traditions about them', or one ascribes the decisive role to 'the historical work which interprets these traditions'. In the first case, the impact of the interpretative level is not belittled, but it is regarded ultimately as the kaleidoscope through which the reader is presented with historical events, however coloured and rearranged. Critics who adhere to this position regard Herodotus first and last as an historian—perhaps a highly imaginative and certainly a highly creative one, but nonetheless one who is mainly concerned with understanding what had happened in the world around him, when and why. They value Herodotus' narrative *qua* rhetorical discourse—for example his use of source-quotations and direct speech—as a legitimate vehicle for the conveyance of a historian's view of history. Of the critics discussed here,

Tourraix (1976), Dewald (1981), and Lateiner (1989) fall into this category. In the second case, the emphasis shifts towards the text—to the *Histories* as an account (probably oral in origin, later committed to writing) that is essentially the creation of a Greek author. Here, Herodotus himself is seen first and last as a writer—a storyteller. From this perspective, the relationship between his text and the historical, outside world is more or less incidental—a matter requiring a separate, altogether different kind of judgment. Although the critics belonging to this latter group will not deny that some references to real, historical events were included in the *Histories*, they consider this hardly relevant to what they see as the core of Herodotus' creation. This position, though based on widely differing theoretical points of view, is here represented by Pembroke (1967), Rossellini and Saïd (1978), and Gray (1995) on the one hand and, occasionally, Fehling (1989[2]) on the other.

The two positions, at least in their most radical versions, are difficult to reconcile. They seem each to be defended by critics who focus predominantly on the ethnography/cultural history contained in the first five books of the *Histories*, with an occasional reference to the last part. Scholars focussing on single episodes, particularly in the last three books (here represented by Munson (1988)), appear to be little troubled by a pull towards either extreme. Ultimately, the common aim of most critics is to look for a balance between text and event—for a means to connect Herodotus' role as creator of his narrative with the historical events that he considered worth recording.

From narrative to historical agency

The recognition of women's central role in the narrative structure of the *Histories* was more or less initiated by Erwin Wolff (1964; Marg (1965) 668–78). In his article, he points out that Herodotus marks the beginning and the end of his main theme—the collision between the Greek and Near-Eastern worlds—with parallel stories: the episode of the Lydian king Candaules, who showed his wife naked to his advisor and later successor Gyges (1.8–13), and the episode of Xerxes' infatuation with first the wife and then the daughter of his brother Masistes (9.108–13).[8] In both stories, a queen's response to her hus-

[8] For the Masistes story, see also Chs. 9, pp. 207–8 and 13, pp. 310–13 in this volume.

band's irresponsible behaviour triggers off a series of disastrous events. What induced Herodotus to select precisely these stories to flank his history? Wolff in fact wondered how and why Herodotus had made a choice between different versions of the same story. The existence of variants was certain in the case of the Lydian episode, but highly unlikely in the case of the Masistes story. Linking his views to Reinhardt's observations concerning the Gyges story (1940; 1960; 1965), Wolff argues that the Masistes story provided the clue to the choice of the Gyges version. In the Persian episode, Xerxes' transgression of marital fidelity and the subsequent revenge of the queen on the one whom she considered the original danger to her own position—Masistes' innocent wife—would ultimately lead to his own downfall (465 BC), a finale not included in the *Histories* themselves but foreshadowed by Herodotus and known to the whole world when he was writing. This pattern of events at the Persian royal court directed Herodotus' selection from among the various Gyges stories. He chose one which enabled him to represent the situation along similar lines: the Lydian king's betrayal of the trust of his wife by placing her in a situation close to enforced infidelity, her subsequent insistence that revenge be taken against the real offender and, after Gyges' decision that Candaules was to blame, the downfall of the latter and the succession of Gyges. Since, according to Herodotus, Gyges' descendant Croesus was the first to begin 'barbarian' agression towards the Greeks, the Lydian episode was the first in a chain of conflicts that would only end with the defeat of Xerxes. The vast canvas of the Greek-barbarian confrontation thus becomes the central part of a triptych, with the wings portraying queens taking decisions fatal to their ruling but erring husbands.

Wolff interprets these stories as narratives that, as a series of situations, lead to a moral of wider significance: kings who destroy themselves and their kingdoms begin by destroying their own households. Thus he breaks away from a long-standing tradition which perceived women's agency in Herodotus as symptomatic of the historian's fatal inclination toward the anecdotal. Instead he shows that the larger project of the *Histories* is represented even in stories he himself classifies as 'harem-love stories' (Wolff (1965) 673). Wolff makes no explicit statements, however, about the connection of these stories to historical reality. Whether Herodotus gives a Hellenized and dramatized account of structural tensions existing within the Persian ruling families, as a specialist on Persian history has argued (Sancisi-Weerdenburg (1983) 27–31), or just passes on a story that

suited his fancies about Xerxes, is not a question Wolff wants to discuss. His approach to the stories of these royal women helps to reveal the structural coherence of the *Histories* as a narrative; that is, to our understanding of Herodotus' views and the ways in which he has moulded his material accordingly.

Although Wolff's article was apparently unknown to him, Alexandre Tourraix (1976) was equally struck by the queen's agency in the Candaules story, but he expanded the argument in several ways. First, he connects the Lydian story not only to its counterpart concerning Xerxes and his queen, but also to about fifty other stories in the *Histories* which reveal a similar pattern. According to Tourraix, episodes such as those of the Athenian tyrant Pisistratus marrying the daughter of Megacles (1.60), the Corinthian tyrant Periander keeping alive the memory of his dead wife Melissa (5.92), the succession of Cyrus to the royal throne through his mother (the Median princess Mandane, 1.107–8), Cambyses gaining power over Egypt through the daughter of pharaoh Apries (3.1–3), and, negatively, the male Babylonians losing power through the killing of the women of their city (3.150), demonstrate that in monarchical societies power exercised by men is only legitimate and lasting if it includes the feminine and is transferred through it. The feminine may be represented by a goddess (see for instance Athena's protection of Peisistratus at Pallene, 1.62) or another kind of feminine power, but most often it is incorporated in the wife, sister, or daughter of the predecessor. There is a strong tie, implicit but effective, between the person of the queen and royal power itself (Tourraix (1976) 370–1). By acting as the indispensable intercessors between men's generations, women were to perform a role that was at once dynamic and consolidating.

> Woman, or femininity, is the guarantee, mortal or immortal, of the solidity of Power, particularly in its monarchical forms: she thus fulfils two complementary and fundamental functions, by simultaneously assuring both the transmission and the permanence of Power. (Tourraix (1976) 369, tr. J. B.).

Thus Tourraix perceives not only a common structure in the opening and closing scenes, as Wolff had done, but also an intermittent series of similarly structured events throughout the *Histories*. The recurrence of this pattern again demonstrates the strong compositional coherence of the *Histories*. Episodes such as the ones on royal succession should be understood, not as digressions, but as instances signifying the meaning of the whole.

The second way in which Tourraix expanded the argument was by ascribing to this pattern a wider meaning than Wolff, who had limited his interpretation to the level of narrative in the strict sense. According to Tourraix, the recurrence of the pattern in both the Greek and Oriental societies exemplifies Herodotus' view that behind cultural differences some historical conditions common to all mankind manifest themselves. One such feature is the fundamental difference between monarchy and democracy (or, in a weaker sense, aristocracy). This difference overrides the distinctions between, say, Persian and Greek in their effects on the vicissitudes of power.[9] Placing the Greek tyrants in the same category as the Near-Eastern kings, classification by the yardstick of monarchy puts 'being Greek' as the alleged norm of civilization into perspective.

Moreover, the pattern implies an idea of matrilinear succession as a prerequisite to patrilinear succession, hence preceding it either in time or in force. Many generations of ancient historians have argued that the manifest connections between (Eastern) monarchy and feminine power in the *Histories* was a clear sign, in the eyes of the ancient Greeks and of modern scholars equally, of that monarchy's fatal weakness and inclination towards capricious tyranny; for examples, see Sancisi-Weerdenburg (1983). In contrast, Tourraix now argues that Herodotus' idea of the feminine basis of monarchical power represents a widely held view on essential connections between women and the historical change of political systems. Tourraix is careful not to commit himself to a judgment as to what really happened, but he insists that Herodotus conveys a notion in which nations both East and West strongly believed, and which thus had gradually become part of the Greek perception of history.

> Throughout the *Histories* Herodotus applies a mythical scheme with an aetiological value, which he derived from a common fund of Greek ideas and which echoed a mental structure [that was partly related to] Indo-Iranian cosmologies. (Tourraix (1976) 380; tr. J. B.).

[9] In this context the Constitutional Debate (3.80–2) is a fine example of the notion that political patterns are universal; compare Herodotus' comment that those who would not believe that Otanes, a Persian, had advocated democracy in this Debate would be astonished to learn that Mardonius founded democracies in various cities on the Ionian coast (6.43).

The interaction between matrilinear and patrilinear pressures in the transmission of power, as Tourraix sees it, recalls the older hypothesis of matriarchy. Since the scholarly excommunication of its most influential spokesman, J. J. Bachofen (*Das Mutterrecht*, 1861), the theme of matriarchy has been considered a tricky affair among ancient historians (Blok (1995) 63–112). At the time of Tourraix's article, however, matriarchy was becoming fashionable again in some feminist circles, and this interest did not escape the notice of professional historians. Tourraix's paper was published in the *Dialogues d'histoire ancienne*, which, true to its name, included a critical response, and Jacques Annequin, who responded to Tourraix, immediately raised objections which clearly aimed at eradicating any matriarchal implication. Tourraix, though defending his argument, hastened to acknowledge that his use of the terms 'matriarchal society' and 'matrilinear filiation' had been imprudent (Tourraix (1976) 389).[10] One of the objections brought forward by Annequin concerned the relationship between narrative and reality. What did Herodotus really know about the practices and traditions which lay behind the stories told him by his Near-Eastern informants? How could we know that the pattern of belief in the feminine basis of monarchical power was truly as widespread as Tourraix claimed it to be? Was it not just a Greek/Herodotean idea projected on to the outside world? Was not the story-pattern of the powerful queen used to conceal a social reality in which women were in fact the objects of marriage exchange? Tourraix replied that one should look at political relationships not only from the outside, but also from inside the society itself. Moreover, although cutting *l'histoire des mentalités* off social history might be a risky step, it was sometimes necessary to start with an analysis of historical 'mentalities' (Tourraix (1976) 389–90).

An additional conclusion might be that this idea of the historical-political role of women represents a view of the world that was not unique to Herodotus but one that he shared with the whole of the ancient world. Thus it would not be Herodotus' presentation of women's historical importance, but rather the historiographical tradition beginning with Thucydides that needed explanation. Such an inference is close to the conclusions drawn by Carolyn Dewald,

[10] The use made of Tourraix's article is interesting: Dewald (1981) 114, Munson (1988) 92, and Lateiner (1989) mention it but use it less than would suit their respective arguments; Gray (1995) does not refer to it at all.

defending the most positive view of Herodotus' description of women's historical prominence to date (Dewald (1981)). Of course she acknowledges a difference between narrative and reality, but the structure of her article draws all our attention to the world as it may have existed beyond Herodotus' text: '[a] real effort is made . . . to describe women as they were, or at least as Herodotus thinks they must have been' (Dewald (1981) 92). Dewald classifies Herodotus' descriptions of 'women as they were' according to the kinds of agency they display in the *Histories*, adding the number of occasions on which each occurs. Thus she argues that 'women who do not act' (128 occasions) but passively participate in events (e.g., being unable to bear children, being given away in marriage, or being war victims) 'become a motif repeatedly emphasizing the thin line that in ancient societies separated cultural survival from cultural extinction.' (Dewald (1981) 93; cf. Lateiner on 'normality' above). 'Women who act' (212 cases), either in groups or individually, carry out all kinds of actions in complementary balance with their men's actions, conforming with the expectations of the same culture, though in a different mode. They are, first and foremost, the ones who maintain the *nomos*; children usually take after their mothers in matters of culture (Carian women married to Ionians, 1.146; Attic women married to Lemnians, 6.138; the Sauromatae living more like Amazons, 4.117). The individual women who act in the public sphere (22 cases) 'frequently . . . articulate the social values that underlie their actions' (Dewald (1981) 108), thus reinforcing the traditional norms which may have come to be at risk at that particular moment. The 62 women who act as priestesses and founders of religious cults are representatives of the divine order imposed on mankind and are therefore not comparable to the former group.

Dewald ((1981) 111) perceives in Herodotus' rendering of existence distinct but connected spheres of activity—nature, society and culture, divinity. She does not relate these spheres to a temporal structure, although she recognizes that the female cult-founders and priestesses recall mythical times (Dewald (1981) 118, n. 27; cf. Vandiver (1991)). Yet the reader of the *Histories* senses that the patterns of culture underlying the events on the surface of history had been created long before,[11] and are firmly founded in religious notions that

[11] Cf. Lateiner (1989) 186: '. . . social structure determines a nation's political fate,

define the limits of human behaviour. Women are the ones who guard this tradition (Dewald (1981) 119 n. 30), and Lateiner (1989) does justice to these relationships by placing 'the subject of women' between 'limit, transgression, and related metaphors' and 'moral principles in history'. These are in fact Greek ideas;[12] in this context it is only fitting that in Herodotus' Egypt, the alleged opposite of Greece, 'women are not dedicated to the service of any god or goddess' (2.35).[13] But Herodotus seems to have forgotten about this when applying the same scheme (religion = very ancient = women's first priority) to several Greek oracles and cults: they originated in very ancient Egypt and with Egyptian women (e.g., Dodona and Siwa, 2.51–8;[14] cf. Leto's oracle, 2.152, 155; the Thesmophoriae, 2.171; temple of Athena at Lindus, 2.182). Nevertheless, women, being the embodiment of social and religious tradition, thus transfer historical culture into the actual events. This connection between the past and the present is particularly exemplified by 'women who act' throughout the Greek and barbarian world. Herodotus' rendering of women's historical agency, according to Dewald, is due to the fact that his descriptions are not yet defined by the conventions of a genre (Dewald (1981) 91). However, other critics of Herodotus' text argue that the very opposite is the case—an argument to which I shall now turn.

From historical agency to narrative

While women participate on the level of narrative proper, acting either in groups or individually, this narrative is situated within Herodotus' world-view, of which his ethnography is a major part. Here, even more tantalizing than in the case of more strictly 'historical' episodes, it is often difficult to assess the relationship between Herodotus' account and the world he describes. Are 'truth' and its

although Herodotus has not yet found the theoretical and abstract terminology to express it so concisely'.

[12] On the Greekness of the idea of women's influence 'long ago', see Pembroke (1967) and below, pp. 237–9.

[13] As *hiratai gynē oudemia* is translated by A. D. Goldey (Loeb-ed.). According to Lloyd (1976, *ad loc.*), Herodotus means to say that in Egypt women could not perform the functions of a Greek *hiereiē*: sacrifice and various tasks concerning the conditions of and around the temple.

[14] Cf. Zografou (1995); Lloyd (1976) *ad loc.*; compare Fehling (1989^2) 65–70, who points out the implausibility of this passage.

opposite 'fiction' adequate terms by which to judge Herodotus' descriptions of societies that were far removed from his own in time or space? Often the borderline between ethnography and historical events is hardly discernible, as in the case of Tomyris, the Scythian queen who defeated Cyrus (1.205–16). What might the action of this valiant queen have to do with the promiscuity her society was reputed to practise?

In an article that stimulated a new approach to Herodotean studies, Simon Pembroke (1967) first makes a careful distinction between Bachofen's theories and the evidence on which they were based. Although Herodotus had certainly not been Bachofen's only source, the *Histories* occupy the most prominent place in the ethno-historical corpus, often comprising the most extensive account, the oldest complete account or even the only extant account of a given people or event. In a number of representative cases, Pembroke compares Herodotus' version with other descriptions of the same situation, for instance the reputed matriliny of the Lycians (1.173; for a full assessment of this case, see Pembroke (1965)). The decisive difference between his own view and that of Bachofen is that, in a metaphor from biological research, Bachofen thought he had found fossils while Pembroke sees the same evidence as descriptions of fossils (Pembroke (1967) 8). This observation changes the nature of the evidence from indications of a historical reality into elements belonging to a discourse. Matriarchy, matriliny, promiscuity, and similar phenomena—'ancient descriptions cannot simply be subsumed under the categories of modern anthropology' (Pembroke (1967) 23)—all appear to be examples of societies whose reputed existence served to represent alternatives to Greek *polis*-life as Herodotus and his contemporaries knew it. These alternatives included situations both in Greece and outside it—for instance women's political rights in Athens when the strife between Athena and Poseidon for overlordship of the city was not yet decided, or matriliny in Lycia. The value attributed to these alternatives could be positive, recalling the golden times of Cronus, or negative, indicating chaos under a rule of women, but most often consisted of a mixture of the two. As to their location in time, the alternatives were usually held to be deep in the past in the case of Greece, but still to be part of the present in the case of societies elsewhere in the world. In this respect some congruity seems to have existed between Herodotus' view of time and space and that of scholars of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries—including J. Lafitau

and Lewis H. Morgan, and other evolutionists such as Bachofen (see also Pembroke (1977)).

Comparison between Pembroke's views and those of Tourraix (who does not refer to him) clearly shows how the arguments point in different directions. Both critics agree that the alleged prominence of women in kinship and politics—and Pembroke's discussion includes various kinds and degrees of sexual licence as well—in the past and elsewhere exists first of all in the eye of the beholder; that is, in the eye of Herodotus and his contemporary Greeks. What Tourraix calls 'a mythical scheme with an aetiological value' is very close to Pembroke's 'structure of alternatives'. The narrated relations between the sexes represent an imagined socio-cultural structure, which the Greeks considered to be effective in both Greek and non-Greek societies. This structure is defined by Tourraix as a religious element of politics and by Pembroke as a matrix to give time and space a political meaning. However, their ways part in the meaning they attribute to 'reality'; the difference may seem slight, but it is important. Tourraix argues that Herodotus' 'mythical scheme' may derive ultimately from a religious tradition common to the Near East and the eastern Mediterranean which must have borne some relation to historical practices. The pattern revealed in the fifty-odd stories reflects some comparable reality, however indirect, twisted and changed it may have become through the prism of myth. Pembroke, on the other hand, makes an essential distinction between the mythical patterns of matriarchy and the reality that the stories claim to reflect. He points out that the models of 'alternative societies' are far more schematic than the historical practices to which they profess to refer: '[no] coherent relation can be established between the pattern of fact and the pattern of tradition' (Pembroke (1967) 35). So no single type of reality may be assumed to be reflected in a similar instance of 'mythical' representation, and 'it is in every case the precise nature of the relation between fact and description which must be ascertained' (Pembroke (1967) 23). In sum, Pembroke is the first to call fundamentally into question the relationship between Herodotus' narrative and the world he claims to portray, not because of Herodotus' alleged 'lying' about the world (cf. Fehling (1989^2) but because of the internal referentiality of his text as part of what amounted to general Greek values.

Relations between Herodotus' world-view and historical reality have dissolved almost entirely in a number of publications that elab-

orate the idea of 'the alternative'.[15] Michele Rossellini and Suzanne Saïd (1978) analyse the model of alternative societies underlying Herodotus' ethnography on a wider scale than Pembroke. They demonstrate that the 'uses of women' (meaning the degrees of monogamy, polygamy to promiscuity) were linked with patterns of behaviour in other codes, notably diet (vegetarian, milk-drinking, cannibalism), sacrifice, and burial. Moreover, the further the society in question was removed from the civilized centre, the more the Greeks' understanding of the rules governing such codes tended to be confused or inversed, or to disappear altogether. In this way a mental map could be drawn to designate the way in which Herodotus would describe and estimate the culture of a people, according to its area of residence. Herodotus' description has a certain logic, a sense and a meaning, but ultimately has nothing to do with reality (Rossellini and Saïd (1978) 1003–4). The theoretical concept of 'alterity' or 'otherness', which holds that the understanding of the 'other' is bound by necessity to use only terms that refer to oneself—a theory which was to gain momentum a few years after Rossellini and Saïd's publication[16]—is only hinted at at the very end of their article. The authors' views are more representative of the Parisian approach to myth (Rossellini and Saïd (1978) 950–3). This includes an awareness of myth's ability to subsume a great variety of phenomena in its structures, thus giving meaning to the world, rather than the other way round, and applying this meaning to a wider area than the themes of the mythical narrative itself.

Although they refer to Pembroke's views, Rossellini and Saïd move in a somewhat different direction. On the one hand, our understanding of women's roles in Herodotus' ethnography is enriched by their revealing the systematic connections with other cultural codes. The meaning of gender in the larger historiographical context can thus be explored; compare for instance Lateiner (1989) on 'ethnography as access to history' and 'historiographical patterning'. On the other hand, this wider view of cultural space goes hand in hand with a diminishing view of the dynamics of time; in the perspective of Rossellini and Saïd's argument, there seems to be hardly any history left in the *Histories*. Indeed, Herodotus' world-view appears also

[15] See also Ch. 15, pp. 365–7, in this volume.

[16] The best-known example of this approach in the case of Herodotus, is Hartog (1980).

to be entirely Hellenocentric, the opposite of what had been supposed before. Because Herodotus defines all forms of 'barbarian' culture by the nature and extent of their being non-Greek, taking the adult, male Greek citizen for a norm and thereby sustaining a Greek-barbarian/male-female polarity, any similarities between Greek and non-Greek societies as represented in the *Histories* have nothing to do with any underlying, historical congruence, but are only the result of an essentially Hellenocentric representation of the world.

Although aiding impressively our understanding of the ways in which Herodotus was constrained by the limitations of his knowledge when approaching others, the concept of 'alterity' as a model, and its concomitant methods, also poses severe limitations. Theoretically, and taken to an extreme degree, to insist on the ultimate self-referentiality of Herodotus' world-view—a charge that could be levelled at any text—renders the whole enterprise of writing history rather pointless. On a more practical level, the 'discourse on the Other' is liable to be applied too schematically. With the overt purpose to criticize such practices, Vivienne Gray analyses some of the more famous stories (including the story of the wife of Candaules, and that of Xerxes and Masistes' wife) in order to demonstrate that the opposition Greek-barbarian, man-woman was too simplistic (Gray (1995)). Gray concludes that the narrative model of the 'vengeful queen' requires the inclusion of the 'vengeful king' and 'vengeful servant' as well. This narrative model exemplifies an underlying political model which complicates a Greek/democratic—barbarian/monarchic polarity by adding a barbarian-master/barbarian-subject polarity (Gray (1995) 201). Although Gray attempts to mitigate the discourse on polarity by drawing Dewald's approach into the discsussion, the outcome still strikes the reader as being quite schematic.

A more satisfactory way of using the polarity-model for subtler ends had been created a few years earlier by Rosaria Munson (1988; not mentioned by Gray). In an admirable discussion of Artemisia, the female tyrant of Halicarnassus and her roles as Xerxes' advisor and as combattant in the Battle of Salamis, Munson shows the recurrent shifting of positions, which destabilizes any fixed meaning of 'self' and 'other', and definitely undermines a polarized view. Artemisia is both female and masculine, Greek and enemy, cunning and victorious; she fights on Xerxes' side but is almost a double of Themistocles. Indeed, although Artemisia does eventually become identified with a topsy-turvy world, threatening to Hellas, that world

resembles Athens more than it does Persia (Munson (1988) 94).

Arguing that Artemisia shows a remarkable similarity to Athens, Munson demonstrates that the Athenian political ideal of *isēgoria* encourages people to pursue their own interests, on the grounds that this is likely to benefit the whole community. In problematic circumstances, however, individuals clearly give up the community to serve their own ends, as indeed Themistocles considered doing if the Greeks failed to resist Xerxes at Salamis. The very same attitude marks Athenian policy after Salamis and the city's subsequent pursuit of its own interests, ultimately at the cost of the community of allied cities. Artemisia also exemplifies the moral-political insight that the use of one's *gnōme* (intelligence) brings greater benefits than enjoying *tuchē* (good fortune). This view draws attention to possible connections between Herodotus and the sophists, and, with greater certainty, to critical judgments of the political attitude of Athens during the 430s and 420s (Munson (1988) 102–5). Munson thus infers that Herodotus' audience was expected to see the Artemisia story in the light of the later consequences of Salamis, just as Wolff concluded that the story of Masistes and his wife (and the wife of Candaules) were to be seen in the light of Xerxes' later death.

It is impossible to say how much of Herodotus' account of Artemisia is his own invention. This remains true of anything he reports for which there is no other source available. Artemisia does not belong to the category of ethnography, but neither is she unequivocally historical. She must have been a famous figure, but obviously Herodotus could not know anything about her secret advice to Xerxes (8.68–9; 101–2), and Fehling gives little credit to the way in which the account of Artemisia's role at Salamis is introduced (Fehling (1989²) 127). From this perspective, Munson's discussion remains firmly on the 'narrative' side. Yet it is her careful analysis of the wider political and philosophical issues at stake in the Artemisia episode that allows a connection to be made between Herodotus the creative story-teller and the historical world in which he lived.

Conclusion

Quite early in Book Five, a small story is inserted on the situation in Miletus some time before the Ionian revolt. Ridden with *stasis*, the Milesians ask the Parians to create peace among them. The

Parian envoys visit the whole territory of Miletus, finding most *oikoi* completely wasted but collecting the names of those whose lands are well tilled. Having returned to the city, the Parians appoint the owners of the well-tilled lands to be the new rulers of Miletus because, they say, these people would probably take as much care of public affairs as they did of their own (5.29). This view seems to have been a common one in the Greek world; in Athens it was voiced on the stage by Creon, speaking to his son Haemon, in Sophocles' *Antigone*: 'The man who acts rightly in family matters will be seen to be righteous in the city as well' (661–2).[17] There is hardly a political theory in classical Athens that does not take the *oikos* as a point of departure for understanding the *polis* as a community and a state.

It seems that Herodotus used this perspective on the *oikos* as a model for the *polis* when shaping his history. The novelty of his approach may be found in his application to history of a model that was being scrutinized, debated, parodied, and applied in many other contexts and genres. The model included much to guide his selection of ethnographical features: genealogy (of peoples and individuals), manners of livelihood, burial, sacrifice, sexual customs, and gendered division of labour. It enabled him to understand the relations between men and women as mutually dependent, even though each sex had priorities and weaknesses of its own. It led him to expect that the most influential interviews would take place behind closed doors. It even provided him with a good entry into the larger theme of the Persian Wars which, because it was inspired by Homer's epic tale of Troy, included domestic relationships. He applied this model widely in his history, and the efforts of modern critics to discern where and how he did so bear testimony to his versatility. Few historians followed his example in antiquity, but his audience probably found his writings not only exciting and enjoyable, but perfectly comprehensible.

[17] On the influence of dramatic styles in Herodotus, see Lateiner (1989) 20–34 and Ch. 6 in this volume.

THE *HISTORIES* AS NARRATIVE

CHAPTER ELEVEN

NARRATIVE UNITY AND UNITS

Irene J. F. de Jong

Introduction: 'harmonious body' versus 'the work of scissors'

In the first century BC the literary critic Dionysius of Halicarnassus enthusiastically concludes that Herodotus

> τὰς πολλὰς καὶ οὐδὲν ἐοικυίας ὑποθέσεις προελομένῳ σύμφωνον ἓν σῶμα πεποιηκέναι.
>
> having chosen a number of subjects which are in no way alike has made them into one harmonious 'body'.[1]

Some twenty centuries later the German scholar Jacoby reaches a totally different verdict:

> After he had taken up the plan to write the work and had devised the structure which he wanted to impose on the material he had gathered, he apparently did not make major changes to his manuscripts, but tried to use his collection of lectures as much as possible as it stood . . . The distribution over the work of the Greek *logoi* which deal with the times before the Persian Wars also appears to be essentially the work of scissors.[2]

These quotations illustrate the two positions which divide the literary scholarship on Herodotus. According to some, Herodotus has managed to create a unified work regardless of the exact way in which his work came about, by piecing together old material or by gradually collecting and processing an ever-expanding body of material.[3]

[1] *Letter to Gnaeus Pompeius*, 3.

[2] (1913) 361: 'Offenbar hat er (Herodotus), nachdem er einmal den Gedanken an das Werk gefasst und den Plan gefunden hatte, dem er sein gesammeltes Material unterwerfen wollte, . . ., an seinen Manuskripten größere Veränderungen nicht vorgenommen, sondern sich bestrebt, seinen Bestand an Vorträgen möglichst in der vorhandenen Form zu verwerten . . . Auch die Verteilung der hellenischen Logoi, soweit sie vorpersische Geschichte gaben, über das Werk hin, erscheint wesentlich als Arbeit mit der Schere.' All translations are mine, unless otherwise indicated.

[3] For an overview of the debate on the genesis of the text, see Fornara (1971a),

According to others, he has failed and the sheer quantity of his material has got the better of him. After Jacoby's fiercely negative assessment at the beginning of this century, the pendulum has swung back again, and scholars have demonstrated Herodotus' thoughtful arrangement of his material, which has resulted in, if not 'one harmonious body', at least some form of unity. In the first part of this chapter I will give a historical overview of the ways in which scholars have defended Herodotus' unity, concentrating on formal rather than thematic arguments.[4] In the second part I will discuss the various devices which Herodotus employs to create unity. In the last part I will show the working of such devices in a specific passage.

Before embarking on the discussion proper, I want to make one point. Many modern discussions of ancient works labour under an anachronistic, nineteenth-century, concept of unity. While I would not go as far as Heath (1989), who argues that ancient poetics and poetical practice adopt a centrifugal rather than a centripetal conception of unity, I would stress that ancient literary taste does show a greater tolerance towards—indeed an appreciation of—the episodic, ecphrastic, and digressional.[5] It is absolutely crucial to keep this in mind when discussing the unity, or lack of it, in Herodotus' *Histories*.

Herodotus' unity: the arguments

This section must begin with Jacoby, who has set the agenda for all scholars to come. This agenda consists mainly of two items: the *Histories* lack (i) a unifying subject and (ii) a unifying structure. *Ad* (i). In his proem Herodotus announces that his subject will be the confrontation between Persians and Greeks, but this subject is virtually absent in the first four books, which deal almost exclusively with the confrontation between Persians and other barbarians ((1913) 333–41). *Ad* (ii). In the first five books the main story (the growth

who rightly stresses (pp. 6–7) that the unity or 'coherence' of a work as we have it, need not say anything about the manner of its origin.

[4] Exponents of this second type of defence are Regenbogen (1930b) and Schadewaldt ((1934) 1960). See also Ch. 1 in this volume.

[5] A central notion, which recurs often in ancient discussions of Herodotus, is ποικιλία, 'variation'. Cf., e.g., Dionysius, *Letter to Pompeius*, 3: ποικίλην ἐβουλήθη ποιῆσαι τὴν γραφήν. It is this variation which allows the author to insert a great deal of digressional material.

of Persian power) is continuously interrupted by *Exkurse*. This structure is a weakness: the digressions 'slow down' or 'disrupt' the main story, pop up at surprising moments, and contain material which Herodotus was not able to present at the 'right' moment ((1913) 379–92).

One of the first to defend Herodotus' unity was Aly. His interest in the folktale elements in Herodotus led him to put forward an original suggestion as to the structure of the *Histories*: the first five books are a frame narrative (*Rahmenerzählung*), a form which Herodotus derived from oriental, folktale literature.[6] This idea even prompted the provocative thesis that, as usual, the framed narratives (Jacoby's disruptive digressions) are more important than the frame itself.

The idea of the *Histories* as a frame narrative was independently proposed by Howald, who also found evidence of this structure in the later books.[7] There the frame is more important than (*überwuchert*) the framed narratives. This idea put forward by Aly and Howald is neither convincing[8]—in a real frame narrative, the frame is sketchy and the framed narratives are independent stories, peopled by different characters than those of the frame—nor particularly helpful. In fact, they consider it a mere expedient for the historian to incorporate as much material as possible, or, in Howald's words, as 'a loose, random frame, which is not organically related to what is recounted, in which Herodotus could place 'his manifold material' ((1923) 128). Where Jacoby saw Herodotus as a hasty and not too proficient editor of his own work, Aly and Howald present him as a naive storyteller who is carried away by his own stories.[9]

Another dubious defence of Herodotus' structure comes from Fränkel. He suggests that Herodotus' many digressions should be seen in the light of his time: early Greek man tended to look at things in isolation, and was not interested in larger causal or logical relations, but only in direct connections ((1924–60) 82–3). This mentality is reflected in the 'strung-along style' or λέξις εἰρομένη, already described by Aristotle (*Rhetoric* III.9), which, according to Fränkel, determines not only the structure of sentences but of the work as a whole:

[6] (1921) 260–2, 297–8; (1929) 66.
[7] (1923) 128–30; (1945) 42.
[8] Cf. the criticism of Immerwahr (1966) 13.
[9] See, in particular, Aly (1921) 262 and Howald (1945) 41–3.

> If the people of this age really liked to see and represent things in such a way, that every element counts as complete in itself and, irrespective of its place within the structure, displays the independent value of its free and stable existence, . . . then the overall structure of the work of art must aim at the pleasure of fullness and colourfulness, quantity and variety . . .[10]

While this influential thesis of Herodotus' paratactic structure appears to be a step forward, in that it tries to understand the *Histories* in terms of early Greek thought and literary taste,[11] it still paints a picture of Herodotus randomly inserting digressions which are only superficially connected to his main story.[12]

An ambiguous contribution to the 'unity' debate comes from Focke. He vigorously denies that Herodotus was just a story-teller, whose only aim was to keep his audience amused (the position of Aly and Howald): 'he has principally nothing in common with oriental or Greek narrators' ((1927) 52). He is an historian, who employs the succession of five oriental despots as the main structure of his *Histories*. However, what Focke gives with one hand (structure), he takes with the other: 'The five great oriental kings have become the main formal carriers of all of Herodotus' material, reservoirs, into which the stuff of narrative has been poured in such quantities that it spills over on all sides.'[13] A new metaphor, but essentially the same picture as drawn by Aly and Howald and their frame narrative.

Not until we come to Pohlenz do we see a turning point in the debate. He identifies a unifying subject (the confrontations between Greeks and barbarians), and argues that the first four books not only serve this subject (in that they set out how the main opponent of

[10] 'Wenn wirklich die Menschen dieser Zeit die Dinge so zu sehen und darzustellen liebten, daß jedes für sich voll gilt und unabhängig von seiner Einordnung den eigenen Wert seines freien und festen Daseins ausstrahlt, . . . so muß der Gesamtaufbau eines Kunstwerks auf den Reiz von Fülle und Buntheit, von Masse und Wechsel gestellt sein . . .'

[11] Fränkel's 'the pleasure of fullness and colourfulness, quantity and variety' reflects the concept of ποικιλία (see note 5). At times, Fränkel does not entirely succeed in suppressing his own—modern—taste, e.g., on pp. 85, 88 ('Und doch hat auch der Herodot des grossen Perserkriegs die Darstellung gewaltiger Ereignisse mit kleinlichen Anekdoten in einer Weise gespickt, *die uns zuwider ist und zuwider sein darf*', my italics), 95.

[12] Fränkel ((1924) 1960) 86. In this context the idea of the frame narrative presents itself again, see Fränkel ((1924) 1960) 87.

[13] (1927) 25: 'Die fünf großen Asiaten sind jetzt die formalen Hauptträger des gesamten herodotischen Materials, Sammelbecken, in die der Stoff in solchen Massen hineingeschüttet ist, daß er nach allen Seiten über ihre Ränder quillt.'

the Greeks, the Persians, attained their position of power), but also contain enough reminders to keep that subject in the forefront of the reader's mind ((1937) 9–21). He is also the first to stress that rather than drowning helplessly in his material, Herodotus consciously *selects* it, passing over what is not relevant to his subject ((1937) 29, 31).[14] As for the digressions, Pohlenz argues that their purpose is to explain the main story ((1937) 39, 42), and that they are not inserted at random, but at points where the main story needs them, i.e., when a new person, people, or location has to be introduced ((1937) 68–73).

An example will illustrate the progression made by Pohlenz. At 5.55 Herodotus interrupts his tale of Aristagoras' visit to Athens, which took place in 499 and which was aimed at persuading the Athenians to join the Ionian revolt, for a 'digression' on Athenian history (chapters 55–96), which covers the years 510–499 BC. According to Jacoby ((1913) 383) and Fränkel (((1924) 1960) 86), this is a typical example of the way Herodotus uses a weak motive ('a historical meeting') in order to include thematically independent material. Pohlenz, however, contends that this is one of the places where Herodotus inserts a historical digression when the action needs it: 'in the fifth book it is logical from a historical point of view that Herodotus informs his readers about the political situation which Aristagoras finds in Athens' ((1937) 41). Indeed, by the time Herodotus picks up his main story, the digression has made it clear why the Athenians—in contrast to the Spartans—will be prepared to join the Ionians and fight the Persians ((1937) 38).

Pohlenz sums up his idea of Herodotus' narrative procedure as follows:

> He is a traveller who knows exactly where he wants to go, who has exactly plotted the main stages of his voyage and keeps to them, but who also allows himself the time to look at all beautiful and interesting things which the road offers, and needs not even be afraid to make long detours to this end, because he knows that he will eventually rejoin the main road at the right point.[15]

[14] This point is later worked out by Lateiner (1989) 59–75.

[15] (1937) 43: 'Er ist der Wanderer, der genau weiß, wohin er schließlich kommen will, auch genau die Hauptstationen seines Weges vorher festgelegt hat und innehält, der sich aber dabei Zeit läßt, um alles Schöne und Interessante, das die Gegend bietet, zu betrachten, und selbst lange Seitenwege zu diesem Zwecke nicht zu scheuen braucht, da er weiß, daß er die Hauptstraße am richtigen Punkte wieder erreichen wird.'

This metaphor of Herodotus the traveller seems to do him and the *Histories* more justice than any previous label (story-teller, frame narrative) or metaphor (reservoir).

A somewhat curious interlude in the 'unity' debate is the study by Myres. In his view, Herodotus' structure is not problematic at all. The plan of the whole work is 'simple', in that the *Histories* consist of two parts: 'a narrative of the struggle between Persians and Greeks, from the Ionian Revolt to the defeat of Xerxes' invasion (5.28–9), preceded by a retrospect of the origin of the quarrel between East and West, and the Rise of the Persian empire and the leading Greek states, Athens and Sparta (1–5.27)' ((1953) 60). Within these parts two structural principles are at work: the 'antistrophic' principle, which means that we find two parallel narratives (e.g., the Athenian and Spartan histories at 1.59–64 and 65–8, or the long accounts of Scythia, 4.1–144, and Libya, 4.145–205), and the 'pedimental' principle, which means that we find a climax in the centre, preceded and followed by episodes which prepare for it and reveal its consequences (e.g., at 1.65–8, where Lycurgus' meeting with the Pythia is the prologue, the meeting between Lichas and the blacksmith of Tegea the epilogue, and the military confrontation between Sparta and Tegea the centre).[16] The problem with this kind of structural analysis is that it is highly subjective. Often the structure is there only in the eye of the beholder; at 1.65–8 why not make the scene of Lichas and the blacksmith the climax?[17] It is also ultimately unhelpful; in comparison with Pohlenz's analysis, the observation that 'the visits of Aristagoras to Sparta, 5.39–54, and to Athens, 5.55–97, serve as the frame for explanatory retrospects of both cities' ((1953) 78) is a regression.

The second turning point (after Pohlenz) is Immerwahr. He detects both a subject ('the history of Persian power and aggressiveness in a well-defined period in which aggression affected the Greeks') and a structure (the *Histories* consists of a series of *logoi*, narrative units which are usually demarcated by ring-composition, which vary in

[16] For the 'antistrophic' principle, see Myres (1953) 62, 78; for the 'pedimental' principle (1953) 62, 81–8.

[17] The following remark by Myres is in fact revealing: 'This pedimental structure, deep-seated and all-embracing though it is, *has escaped the notice even of literary critics*, probably because the literary skill of Herodotus has so completely united the substance of history with its form' ((1953) 86–7, my italics).

length and which may themselves consist of smaller *logoi*).[18] The overall structure of the *logoi* is paratactic, yet they do form a unity in that they share narrative patterns (there are dramatic and circular *logoi*)[19] and thought patterns ('thought and action', 'rise and fall of a ruler', etc.).[20] In Immerwahr's analysis, the paratactic style has gained in power; it is not the product of an inquisitive but unstructured mentality (Fränkel), but rather a sophisticated literary and historiographical instrument.

The years that followed saw the publication of two studies on the digressions, which both expand and refine Pohlenz's defence of these passages. The first is Bornitz, who sets out to show that the historical digressions (notably those on Greek history in Books One, Five, and Six) are closely connected to one another and to the main story. With regard to passage 5.55–97, he notes ((1968) 106–9) how it seamlessly continues the history of Athens, which was started at 1.59–64 (there we heard about Athens becoming a tyranny under Peisistratus, here Herodotus recounts how this tyranny was put to an end); how this episode marks the beginning of the rivalry and hostilities between Athens and Sparta, which will determine their behaviour in the ensuing Persian Wars; and how Athens' brief flirtation with Persia (5.73) casts a dubious light on their later pious oath that their mentality is such that they would never consider siding with the Persians (8.144).

The second study is by Cobet, who argues that the (ethnographical and geographical) digressions not only serve to explain the main story, but also enrich it, in that they contain material which is itself of interest. Herodotus simply cast his net wide, in an effort to include everything he could find about the known world:

> thus Herodotus introduces the large *logoi* not only in order to make clear which people caused certain events, but much more simply, because events draw attention to something that in itself deserves our interest—because the context points to it, not because the context demands it.[21]

[18] For the structure, see Immerwahr (1966) 17–45 (quotation from p. 44), for the subject (1966) 14–15.

[19] Immerwahr (1966) 46–72.

[20] Immerwahr (1966) 72–8.

[21] (1971) 156–7: 'Und so führt Herodot die großen Logoi nicht allein dafür ein, um verständlich zu machen, welches Volk solches Geschehen möglich machte, sondern viel einfacher lenkt das Geschehen den Blick auf etwas, das selbst Aufmerksamkeit

An entirely different direction was indicated by Waters. He stresses that the *Histories* is a narrative (which means that the historical digressions may be seen as flashbacks; an improvement over *Exkurse*) and points to the Homeric epics as an important model for Herodotus' structure:

> [the *Odyssey*] presents a model of ingenious construction with its double thread and its elaborate flash-back technique. These structural methods, together with the range of the *Odyssey*, its time-span of twenty years, its geographical extent, its ethnology (e.g., Cyclops!) and gallery of θωμαστά, make it an obvious comparison with the history and certainly a source of suggestions as to narrative structure.[22]

Although Herodotus' dependence on Homer had previously been mentioned in passing by scholars,[23] this was the first time it was used to get a better grip on Herodotus' handling of his material. Unfortunately, Waters spoils the effect of this new approach by retaining the old idea of Herodotus as the inveterate story-teller:

> [The tales of Tellus and Cleobis and Biton are inserted because] Herodotus perhaps thought he could tell [them] better than the current market-place retailers. Artists tend to do what they like doing, especially if they get paid for it, and Herodotus likes to tell tales. ((1974) 6–7)

Another important contribution is a small article by Carbonell, which has not received the attention it deserves. His thesis is that the structurizing principle in Herodotus is time:

> It is not space which orders and organises the Histories. It is time which turns it into a rigorously chronological work, even if that rigour requires some apparent disorder.[24]

At first glance, this is hardly a revolutionary idea,[25] but when we review the scholarship summarized so far, we see that it had not

beansprucht, sicherlich weil der Zusammenhang darauf führt, aber nicht, weil der Zusammenhang es verlangt.'

[22] (1974) 3, and cf. (1985) 61–70.

[23] For example, Jacoby (1913) 377, 380, Aly (1921) 266, and Thomson (1935) 224–7. See also Ch. 5 in this volume.

[24] (1985) 145: 'Ce n'est pas l'espace qui ordonne et organise les Histoires. C'est le temps qui en fait une oeuvre rigoureusement chronologique, même si cette rigueur exige un apparent désordre.'

[25] Clearly, Carbonell, who does not place his own contribution within the context of the 'unity' debate, is himself unaware of the contentious nature of his thesis.

previously been proposed. Indeed, Fränkel had emphatically rejected time as a structurizing principle:

> As regards Herodotus, in his work time is completely lacking as a means of connecting the many things from many countries about which he has something to say. This is surprising in a historian, but as has often been observed, he simply has no interest in chronology. One could even say that he and the archaic period to which he still partly belongs has no sense at all of the ceaseless march of time . . . Herodotus does not hesitate to stop time: he reports on completely different things, describes, say, a country and its inhabitants in many, many pages, and only when he is quite finished will he let time roll on. Nor is he afraid of reversing the chronological order.[26]

Elsewhere (de Jong (1999) 230–41, (2001)) I suggest that Herodotus' relative disinterest in real, extra-textual chronology may have caused scholars to close their eyes to time as an intra-textual principle. In the case of Fränkel, it also seems that his firm ideas about the mind of archaic man have determined his position. Expanding the suggestions of Waters and Carbonell, I propose to call Herodotus' structure 'anachronical': like Homer, he has restricted the time span of his main story, but has included a much larger period in the form of anachronies: analepses (flashbacks) and prolepses (flashforwards).[27] He has developed this technique by changing its scale and complexity. Thus he includes many more and, above all, much longer anachronies, and complicates them by putting them in the mouths of both narrator and characters (whereas in Homer they tend to be voiced only by the characters). This thesis considerably modifies the idea of Herodotus' structure being paratactic; the elements of his story do not follow each other like beads on a string but are placed in a

[26] ((1924) 1960) 85: 'Was zunächst Herodot betrifft, so fehlt bei ihm fast ganz, als Bindemittel zwischen den vielen Dingen die er aus vielen Ländern zu berichten weiß, die Zeit. Bei einem Historiker nimmt das wunder; aber er hat nun einmal für Chronologie, wie das schon oft ausgesprochen ist, kein Interesse. Man kann sogar sagen, daß ihm, und der archaischen Epoche zu der er halb nocht gehört, der Sinn für die rastlos fortschreitende Zeit überhaupt abgeht . . . Es kostet Herodot keine Überwindung die Zeit anzuhalten: er berichtet von ganz anderen Dingen, schildert z.B. ein Land und seine Geschichte auf vielen, vielen Seiten unserer Bücher, und erst wenn er damit fertig ist, läßt er sie weiterrollen. Und er kennt auch keine Scheu vor der Umkehrung der Zeitenfolge.' Cf. also Lateiner (1989) 114.

[27] The term 'anachronies' derives from Genette (1980) 35–6: 'the various types of discordance between the two orderings of story [= the events in their chronological order] and narrative [= the events in the order we read them in the text]'.

temporal perspective, the past and future illuminating the present.[28]

The concept of 'anachronical structure' only accounts for the historical digressions. What about the ethnographical and geographical ones? Once again, the fact that the *Histories* is a narrative and is modelled on the Homeric epics is of prime importance. All narratives contain descriptions, even though, as Hamon ((1993) 9–36) shows, literary critics have always had a problem with this 'strange' element. In fact, Hamon's characterization of the typical *descripteur*, suits Herodotus perfectly:

> He is a voyager, a tourist, an explorer, someone with a scientific mission or who travels in order to learn or to fill in a gap in institutionalized knowledge.[29]

Specifically, there is the precedent of descriptions in Homer (e.g., Achilles' shield in *Il.* 18.478–608, or Calypso's cave in *Od.* 5.63–75). Erbse (1992: 157–79) suggests—convincingly—that Herodotus 'derived from the Homeric ekphraseis the right to discuss geographical questions in the context of a narrative, that is to say of a historical narrative' ((1992) 157).[30] He also shows how in most cases the information of a geographical or ethnographical description is relevant to what follows. Thus the lengthy description of Scythia (4.5–31) will allow the narratees to understand why Darius' expedition against this people fails.

I conclude that approaching the *Histories* as a narrative and looking at the Homeric epics as a model has much enhanced our appreciation of its structure. Herodotus has adopted the model of a main story expanded by analepses, prolepses, and descriptions, and enlarged its scale. The analepses and prolepses introduce the necessary background information on people and places, while the descriptions set the stage on which the events of the main story will be played out or provide the narratees with the information which they need to appreciate what follows.

Before turning to the next part—and in the spirit of Herodotus himself—I would like to insert a digression on the terms adopted by scholars when talking about narrative units within the *Histories*.

[28] For further examples, see Ch. 22, pp. 501–4 in this volume.

[29] (1993) 38: 'c'est un voyageur, un touriste, un explorateur, quelqu'un d'investi d'une mission scientifique ou qui voyage pour apprendre ou pour combler une case vide du savoir institutionnalisé.'

[30] See also Ch. 18, pp. 415–16 in this volume.

Narrative units: the terminology

There are three terms which are regularly used in the scholarship on Herodotus to refer to narrative units within the *Histories: logos*, digression (*Exkurs*), and novella. And yet each of the three terms is problematic.

In the case of *logos*, we must distinguish between the use of the term by Herodotus (a section in his work which may be of varying length) and by scholars themselves, who often fail to mark the distinction: the independent texts which Herodotus pasted together to form the *Histories* (Jacoby (1913) 282), folktales in prose (Aly (1921) 18, Thomson (1935) 32); prose texts which collect and combine material according to rational criteria (Pohlenz (1937) 54–5); 'prose texts which attempt to describe and explain the natural world or some aspect of it. They may be ritual or religious myths, historical legends about particular persons or occasions, fables . . . or mere folktales' (Myres (1953) 70–3); 'a series of items, which are themselves smaller *logoi*, held together by certain formal elements signifying in turn a selection (but never the totality) of unifying themes beside which other elements are left intact' (Immerwahr (1966) 14–15); or indirect and direct speeches by characters (as opposed to *erga*, the events as recounted by the narrator) (Hunter (1982) passim).[31] Faced with this bewildering series, I can only conclude that an in-depth study of the term *logos*, both inside the *Histories* and in the literature of his time is a desideratum.

At first glance, the use of the term digressions or *Exkurse* seems warranted by the fact that Herodotus himself occasionally speaks of προσθήκη, 'addition' (4.30), and παρενθήκη, 'insertion' (7.171). But at least from Jacoby onwards, the concept of the Herodotean *Exkurs* began to live a life of its own. Jacoby himself lists no fewer than three types of *Exkurse*: (1) not real ones: 'those which clearly only serve to insert material that could not be placed somewhere in the main story' ((1913) 381), (2) real ones: 'short digressions, which can easily be missed and which cause no or hardly any disruption' ((1913) 384), and those which (3) 'afterwards add important, very important

[31] Immerwahr explicitly states that his *logoi* do not necessarily coincide with those of Herodotus. For one thing, Herodotus does not systematically label parts of his work a *logos*, whereas Immerwahr's analysis of the *Histories* in *logoi* ((1966) 79–147) covers the whole text.

material which Herodotus could not present in their proper place' (386). It is clear from his analysis of the structure of the *Histories* ((1913) 283–326) that, in his view, this work consists mainly of *Exkurse* and *Exkurse* within *Exkurse*. Jacoby's great opponent Pohlenz, not only demonstrates the explanatory function of many digressions (see the above section), but also contends that certain passages should not be considered digressions at all:

> [The *logoi* on Greek history] were for him a necessary part of his subject matter, whether they paint the political situation of the motherland in a certain period or recount events which are either relevant to the Asiatic situation of the moment or will become important later on.[32]

Immerwahr opts for a more radical approach, rejecting the notion of digression altogether: '. . . contrary to many scholars, I believe that the few places where Herodotus speaks of additions to his work are not of any real importance for the understanding of its structure' ((1966) 14, n. 34). As we have seen in the previous section, he prefers to see the *Histories* as a series of *logoi*. His suggestion that it would be better to abolish the term digression has not been followed by Cobet, who insists on using the word *Exkurs*, although he is well aware that it is not exactly the same as Herodotus' προσθήκη and παρενθήκη or *logoi*:

> the term 'Exkurs' is entirely a construction of and for ourselves, which covers everything that in our view seems to lead away from the main context. ((1971) 82)

He distinguishes three types of *Exkurse*: (1) ethnographical and geographical digressions, (2) novellas, and (3) places where Herodotus goes beyond the temporal boundaries of his story by relating events which took place after 479 BC. As we saw in the previous section, Cobet in fact manages to make clear the function of most of these *Exkurse*, and for this reason it is all the more regrettable that he did not choose another term, which does not have the connotation of disconnectedness.

[32] (1937) 42: '[Die *logoi* über die griechische Geschichte] gehören für ihn notwendig zur Sache, mögen sie nun die politische Lage des Mutterlandes in einer bestimmten Zeit schildern oder Ereignisse erzählen, die entweder gegenwärtig mit der asiatischen Handlung in Zusammenhang stehen oder für die spätere Entwicklung Bedeutung gewinnen.'

The suggestion to give up the notion of digression can also be read between the lines in Hartog:

> What I would question are the grounds for making a separation between one Herodotus, who is the historian of the Persian wars, and another or, rather Herodotus' other self. It is perfectly possible to see the 'ethnographic' part and the 'historical' part with the same eye and to read both with the same voice . . . To separate one from the other, making one come before the other, or hiding one behind the other, is after all to fall victim to Thucydides . . . ((1980) 319; I quote the translation by Janet Lloyd)

After Immerwahr disposed of the notion of digression/*Exkurs* for the Anglo-Saxon scholars, Hartog for the French, it is a pity that Erbse did not do the same for the German one, especially since he comes so close. In his introduction he speaks of *sogenannte Exkursen* and at the opening of his section on *Exkurse* he states that

> the common term 'Exkurs' as a reservoir of random, not seldom fabulous notes is not of great use for the interpretation of Herodotus, indeed perhaps misleading. ((1992) 121)

As we have seen, Erbse rightly linked the ethnographical and geographical digressions to Homeric descriptions. In his analyses he consistently speaks of *Beschreibungen* or *Beobachtungen* (instead of *Exkurse*), yet he has not taken the final—in my view, necessary—step, of dropping the word *Exkurs* altogether.

Perhaps the most enigmatic type of narrative unit is the novella. Here we are on even thinner ice than in the previous two cases, since the word is not used by Herodotus. Indeed, it was only coined in fourteenth-century Italy. But even if we accept the use of such a modern term to refer to ancient texts—after all, we do the same in the case of the ancient novel—there remain two problems: (1) whether there were 'novellae' in the time of Herodotus, and (2) whether his *Histories* contain such 'novellae' (or in any case the vestiges of this genre). Most German Herodotusscholars agree that the answer to both questions is 'yes'. Aly, Regenbogen, Heni, Cobet, and Erbse all confidently refer *passim* to the typically Ionian genre of novellae: short and entertaining stories about real people, situated in a certain place and at a certain time (in contrast to the folktale), and including a great deal of direct speech.[33]

[33] There is one non-German adherent to the novella theory: Trenkner (1958) 24.

The ultimate source of this theory on the Ionian novella is Erdmannsdörffer (1870). In a brochure, entitled 'Die Zeitalter der Novelle in Hellas', this scholar claims that in many respects the period of the tyrants in Greece resembles the fourteenth-century Italy of Boccaccio (the inventor of the novella), and that hence we may postulate the existence of this genre in Greece as well. Unfortunately, no one has yet been able to produce a specimen of such a novella. Aly's argument that we are dealing with unwritten literature and that hence *by definition* no specimen is left ((1921) 5–6) is clever but in the end *e silentio*. Of course, there will have been short oral prose narratives (alongside the long poetic ones of epic), but I do not think that these were an exclusively Ionian affair, or that in the absence of any specimina, it is sound to posit a specific genre of novellae.

So much for point 1. Even assuming that there were such Ionian novellae, there is still the problem of identifying them in the *Histories*. If we take Cobet ((1971) 140–57) or Erbse (1992), for example, we see that they simply call every passage with anecdotal or folktale content and a great deal of speech a novella: not only the 'Gyges and Candaules' story at 1.8–13, but also Xerxes' decision to attack Greece at 7.5–19, and the 'False Smerdis' story at 3.30–66. In essence, however, these passages do not differ from the rest of the *Histories*; they are all examples of the same narrative art. In my view, we would do better to get rid of the term novella and instead call the passages which have been labelled as such 'scenes' (in the narratological sense of the word).[34] Like any narrator, Herodotus has the possibility to present his story as a series of events and actions (e.g., Alyattes' war against Thrasybulus and the Milesians at 1.17–22) or as a scene, which means that he slows down the pace of narration, so as to approach the length of time of the events and actions, giving us details about scenery or the characters (their gestures, facial expressions, etc.) and quoting their words.

The fact that her book is based on a Polish dissertation may be relevant here. Thus the secondary literature listed by her is almost exclusively German.

[34] See Genette (1980) 95, 109–12 and Bal (1985) 71, 73–5.

Herodotus' unity: the means

In this section I will discuss the narrative devices which the Herodotean narrator employs to create unity, on the level of the parts of his work as well as on that of the work as a whole.[35] I will proceed from small to large and from explicit to implicit.

(1) Repetition of words. In the course of a story or section the narrator repeats a word which is central to that story or section. An example is the root συμφορ- in the 'Adrastus' story at 1.34–45, which recurs in 35.1.4, 41.1, 42.1, and 45.3.[36] Of course, not every recurring word is an example of significant word repetition. Long (1987), who pays much attention to word repetition in his analysis of Herodotus' short stories, is, in my view, much too ready to designate a repetition as significant. Thus in that same 'Adrastus' story, I take issue with him for giving so much weight to the repetition of μεγάλη (34.1), μέγα (36.1), and μέγιστος (36.2). A detailed study of word repetition in the *Histories*, including a thorough theoretical discussion of what makes a repetition significant, is a desideratum.[37]

(2) Presentation markers of the type 'as follows' (pointing forward)[38] and 'thus' (pointing backward),[39] for example:

> Κατ' αὐτὸν δὲ Κροῖσον τάδε ἐγίνετο. (1.85)
>
> With Croesus himself the following happened.
>
> κατὰ μέν νυν τὸν κρητῆρα οὕτω ἔσχε. (1.70.1)
>
> This was what happened to the bowl.

Presentation markers often occur as part of headlines (see below 3) or ring-compositions (see below 4).

(3) Headlines and conclusions. The narrator announces beforehand what a story or section will be about or concludes afterwards what it has been about,[40] for example:

[35] As in section 1, I concentrate on the formal devices, leaving out of account the motifs and story patterns, which on the level of the content lend unity. I also leave aside linguistic devices, such as the use of tenses, for which see Rijksbaron (1988).

[36] For other examples, see van der Veen (1996) 6–22.

[37] Fehling's study on figures of repetition (1969) contains a great deal of material, but provides no interpretative evaluation of that material.

[38] See also Ch. 1, pp. 19–20 on *hēde* in the proem.

[39] Fränkel ((1924) 1960) 65–6, Pohlenz (1937) 87, Immerwahr (1966) 52–3, and Müller (1980) 51–8, 69–70.

[40] Immerwahr (1966) 53 and Lang (1984) 2–5.

τῷ δὴ λέγουσι Κορίνθιοι . . . θῶμα μέγιστον παραστῆναι, Ἀρίονα τὸν Μηθυμναῖον ἐπὶ δελφῖνος ἐξενειχθέντα ἐπὶ Ταίναρον. (1.23)

The Corinthians tell that there happened to him [Periander] a very great marvel, the transport of Arion of Methymna to Taenarus on a dolphin.

Headlines and conclusions can also be expanded into narratorial interventions, i.e., with the narrator referring to his own activity, for example:

Ἐπιδίζηται δὲ δὴ τὸ ἐνθεῦτεν ἡμῖν ὁ λόγος τόν τε Κῦρον ὅστις ἐὼν τὴν Κροίσου ἀρχὴν κατεῖλε, καὶ τοὺς Πέρσας ὅτεῳ τρόπῳ ἠγήσαντο τῆς Ἀσίης. (1.95)

But it is next the business of my history to set out who this Cyrus was who brought down the power of Croesus and how the Persians came to be rulers of Asia.

(4) Ring-composition. At the end of a section the narrator repeats the words with which he began,[41] for example:

. . . τὸ μὲν Ἀττικὸν κατεχόμενόν τε καὶ διεσπασμένον ἐπυνθάνετο ὁ Κροῖσος ὑπὸ Πεισιστράτου τοῦ Ἱπποκράτεος τοῦτον τὸν χρόνον τυραννεύοντος Ἀθηναίων. (1.59)

. . . Croesus learnt that the Attic people was held in subjection and divided into factions by Peisistratus, son of Hippocrates, who at that time was tyrant of Athens.

Τοὺς μέν νυν Ἀθηναίους τοιαῦτα τὸν χρόνον τοῦτον ἐπυνθάνετο ὁ Κροῖσος κατέχοντα . . . (1.65)

About the Athenians Croesus learnt that at that time such things were occupying them . . .

This device marks off analepses, prolepses, and descriptions, but also sections of the main story. The element which is repeated signals either the end of the analepsis, etc., or the resumption of the main story. In the latter case, the ring-composition can also be described in terms of an epanalepsis. Ring-compositions often consist of a combination of headline and conclusion, and contain presentation-markers, for example:

[41] Fränkel ((1924)1960) 71–2, Immerwahr (1966) 12, 54–8, Pohlenz (1937) 63, Beck (1971), Lang (1984) 5–6, and Bakker (1997a) 115–21. See also Ch. 3, p. 000 (nu 16 ff.) in this volume.

Σάρδιες δὲ ἥλωσαν ὧδε . . . οὕτω δὴ Σάρδιές τε ἡλώκεσαν καὶ πᾶν τὸ ἄστυ ἐπορθέετο. (1.84.1, 5)

Sardes was taken in the following way . . . Thus Sardes had been taken and the whole city was being destroyed.

(5) Cross-references. The narrator remarks that he has already recounted something earlier in his work or will do so later,[42] for example:

Τοῦτον δὴ ὧν τὸν Ἀστυάγεα Κῦρος ἐόντα ἑωυτοῦ μητροπάτορα καταστρεψάμενος ἔσχε δι' αἰτίην τὴν ἐγὼ ἐν τοῖσι ὀπίσω λόγοισι σημανέω· (1.75.1, the narrator will fulfill his promise at 1.124)

This Astyages then was Cyrus' mother's father, and was made subject to him for a reason which I will set out in a later section.

. . . Κροῖσον ὕστερον τούτων ἄρξαντα ἀδικίης κατεστρέψατο, ὡς εἴρηται μοι πρότερον. (1.130.3, the narrator refers back to 1.79–85)

. . . later he subdued Croesus, who had started being unjust, as I have already told before.

(6) Repeating prolepses and analepses. Instead of making an explicit cross-reference (as in 5), the narrator merely repeats something he has already related or reveals something he will later recount in full, for example:

. . . Ἅρπαγος κατέβη διάδοχος τῆς στρατηγίης, . . ., τὸν ὁ Μήδων βασιλεὺς Ἀστυάγης ἀνόμῳ τραπέζῃ ἔδαισε, ὁ τῷ Κύρῳ τὴν βασιληίην συγκατεργασάμενος (1.162.1, analepsis of 119, 123–9)

.. Harpagus came to succeed him as commander,. . ., the same whom Astyages, king of the Medes, had entertained with an unholy meal, and who had helped Cyrus to get the kingship.

. . . τὸ σκηπτόμενοι οἱ Πέρσαι ὕστερον ἀντενεπίμπρασαν τὰ ἐν Ἕλλησι ἱρά.

Using this [the burning of Sardes by the Greeks] as a pretext, they later set fire to temples in Greece. (5.102.1, prolepsis of 6.19, 96, 101; 8.33, 53)

(7) Interaction of speech and narrator-text.[43] This interaction can take different forms. The narrator can prepare for a speech, for example: Coes' speech about the Scythians (4.97), in which he warns Darius that he is about to 'march against a country where you will

[42] Jacoby (1913) 282, 327 and Pohlenz (1937) 87.
[43] For more examples, see de Jong (1999) 254–8.

find neither tilled lands nor inhabited cities', is prepared for at 4.46.2–3, where the narrator tells the narratees that the Scythians 'have no established cities . . . and live not by tilling the soil . . .'.

The narrator can react to a speech, for example: at 1.209.3–5 Cyrus sets out an interpretation of his dream, which is corrected by the narrator at 210.1.

Some speeches contain analepses of events already recounted by the narrator. Thus at 7.10.α.2 Artabanus uses the example of Darius' unsuccessful expedition against the Scythians, recounted by the narrator at 4.83–144, in an attempt to dissuade Xerxes from marching against the Greeks. The frequency with which characters use the past as an argument in their speeches lends the device of the actorial analepsis[44] an extra, thematic function, in addition to its formal, unifying function: it shows the narratees that history is not only about preserving the *kleos* of great deeds and men from the *past*, but also about dealing with one's own *present* situation.

There are also speeches that contain prolepses of events to be later recounted by the narrator.[45] Croesus at 1.207 advises Cyrus to cross the Araxes, march into the territory of the Massagetae, prepare a festive meal, and then withdraw to the river again. He anticipates that the Massagetae will start feasting and thereby become easy prey for the Persian army. Cyrus follows his advice and everything happens exactly as foreseen (1.211). Much more often, however, events evolve very differently from the way in which the characters had foreseen, hoped, or feared. One need only think of Darius' and Xerxes' oft-expressed intentions of conquering Greece. Actorial prolepses, in which the *Histories* abound, thereby, like the actorial analepses, acquire an extra, thematic function: they allow the narratees to distinguish between wise characters, who are able to foresee the future, and blind characters (the majority), who overestimate their own possibilities, forget their limits as mortals and, above all, do not take to heart the Herodotean motto that 'human prosperity is never stable' (1.5).

(8) Narrative integration of descriptions. This can be achieved by having a character look at scenery (e.g., 4.85–6, where Darius looks at the Pontus), visit sites (e.g., Xerxes at 7.26, 30, 43, 59, 108, 109,

[44] An actorial analepsis is one made by a character, while a narratorial analepsis is one made by the narrator.

[45] Cf. Hunter (1982) 190–6.

197), or inform another character about a country (e.g., 7.130, where Greek guides inform Xerxes about Thessaly).[46]

By way of conclusion I would like to note that as regards techniques 3, 4, 6, 7, and 8, Herodotus once again had Homer as his model.

Narrative unity: an example

To show the working of some of the narrative devices listed in the previous section, I will analyse in detail the passage 5.55–97, which has already featured several times in the historical overview presented in the first part of this chapter.

55–96.2: a chunk of Athenian history (514–499 BC). This narratorial analepsis as a whole is enclosed by ring-composition: 'Being compelled to leave Sparta, Aristagoras went to Athens' (55) ≈ . . . at this moment, Aristagoras the Milesian, driven from Sparta, . . . came to Athens' (97.1).

55–65.5: Athens frees itself from its tyrants Hipparchus (514 BC) and Hippias (510 BC). This section is marked off by ring-composition, which is a combination of a headline and a conclusion, both of which contain presentation markers: '(Athens) which had been freed from its ruling despots in the following manner' (55) ≈ 'Thus the Athenians got rid of their tyrants' (65.5).

56: Hipparchus has a dream before he is murdered (514 BC). This narratorial analepsis is triggered by 'When Hipparchus had been slain . . . *after seeing in a dream a very clear picture of the evil that befell him*' (55). It is introduced by a headline, which contains a presentation marker: 'The dream of Hipparchus was as follows'.

57–61: the Gephyrean clan comes from Phoenicia to Boeotia to Athens (*c.* 1200–1100 BC).[47] This narratorial analepsis is triggered by 'When Hipparchus . . . had been slain . . . by Aristogeiton and Harmodius, *men of Gephyrean descent* . . .' (55).

[46] Jacoby (1913) 383, 390; he regards these forms of integration as 'artificial'.

[47] This date and the others which follow make no claims to exact accuracy; they will merely serve to place the analepses in some form of chronological order.

62.1: a narratorial intervention, which caps the analepses of 56 and 57–61 and announces in the form of a renewed headline the continuation of the section 55–65: 'I have shown what was the vision of Hipparchus' dream and what the first origin of the Gephyreans, of whom were the slayers of Hipparchus; now I must go further and return to the story which I began to tell, namely how the Athenians were freed from their tyrants.'

62.2–65.5: Athens frees itself from its tyrants (cont.).

65.5–96.2: history of Athens after it has freed itself (510–499 BC). This section is introduced by a headline in the form of a narratorial intervention: 'All the noteworthy things that they did or endured, after they were freed and before Ionia revolted against Darius and Aristagoras of Miletus came to Athens to ask the help of its people, these I will now first relate' (65.5).

67.1–69.1: Cleisthenes rules Sicyon (600–570 BC). This narratorial analepsis is marked off by ring-composition: 'In this respect, it seems to me, this Cleisthenes imitated his own mother's father, Cleisthenes the despot of Sicyon.' (67.1) ≈ '. . . and the Athenian Cleisthenes, who was the son of that Sicyonian's daughter and bore his name, did to my thinking imitate his namesake . . .' (69.1).

71: the Accursed get their name (*c.* 630 BC). This narratorial analepsis is triggered by 'Cleomenes demanded the banishment of Cleisthenes and many other Athenians, *the Accursed, as he called them*' (70), and is introduced by a headline, which contains a presentation marker: 'The Accursed got their name as follows.'

76: the four Dorian invasions of Attica (*c.* 1200–505 BC). This narratorial analepsis is marked off by ring-composition, which combines a headline and conclusion, which contains a presentation marker: 'This was the fourth time that Dorians had come into Attica' ≈ 'thus this was the fourth Dorian invasion of Athens'.

82.1–89.1: the origin of the Aeginetans' long-standing hatred of the Athenians (*c.* 700–500 BC). This narratorial analepsis is triggered by 'But the Aeginetans . . . had in mind *an ancient feud with Athens*' (81.2) and is marked off by a ring-composition, which combines a headline, which contains a presentation marker, and a conclusion, which takes the form of a narratorial intervention: 'Now this was the beginning of the Aeginetans' long-standing enmity against the Athenians' (82.1) ≈ 'and the enmity of

the Athenians against the Aeginetans began as I have told' (89.1).
92.β.1–η.4: tyrants rule Corinth (*c.* 650–585 BC). This actorial analepsis is triggered by 'you prepare to introduce *tyrannism* in the cities, the most unrighteous and bloody institution there is' (92.α.1).
94.1–95.2: Sigeum comes under Athenian rule (600 BC). The narratorial analepsis is triggered by 'Hippias withdrew to *Sigeum*'. It is capped by a conclusion, which contains a presentation marker: 'thus then Sigeum came to be under Athenian rule' (95.2).

What I hope this analysis has made clear is that, yes, at first sight Herodotus' narrative, with its repeated interruptions of the story line, seems to be a muddle. However, if we would place the analepses in their chronological order, the following picture would emerge: the four Dorian invasions of Attica—the Gephyrean clan comes from Phoenicia to Boeotia to Athens—the origin of the enmity between the Aeginetans and the Athenians—the tyrants rule Corinth—the Accursed get their name—Sigeum comes under Athenian rule—Cleisthenes rules Sicyon—Hipparchus has a dream before he is murdered. In other words, this would result in the random historiography which Aristotle—disparagingly—describes in his *Poetics*: historiography which lumps together 'events that have a merely casual relation to each other' (23, cf. 9). When we return to Herodotus' anachronical structure and examine it more closely, we discover it to be highly effective. The analepses are clearly marked off, triggered by an earlier element in the text, and are usually relevant to the context.[48] In some cases, they motivate an action by characters (the Aeginetans' hatred of the Athenians explains why they do not help them; the story about the tyrants who ruled Corinth is designed to dissuade the Athenians from recalling Hippias;[49] the Athenian rule of Sigeum explains why Hippias goes there instead of accepting the hospitality offered to him in Macedonia or Thessaly; the whole analepsis on

[48] For a—largely convincing—analysis of 5.55–97 in these terms, see Legrand (1942) 43–9.

[49] Here I disagree with Legrand, who claims that the story of Cypselus' childhood has no argumentative function and is merely inserted by Herodotus here because he could find no better place and did not want to leave a good story untold ((1942) 48). For the relevance of the passage, see van der Veen (1996) 86–9.

Athenian history explains both why the Athenians are prepared to join the Ionians against the Persians and why Aristagoras comes to Athens in the first place). In other cases, they provide the narratees with background information which a modern text would give in a footnote (the explanation of the nickname 'Accursed', the four invasions of the Dorians). In yet other cases, they enrich the context (Cleisthenes' reforms in Corinth provide an interesting parallel to those of Cleisthenes in Athens;[50] the story of Hipparchus' dream makes clear how Hipparchus chooses not to heed this warning, a favourite Herodotean motif).[51] Only in the case of the analepsis on the Gephyrean clan, which is in fact a vehicle for a section on the Phoenician alphabet, I am forced to admit that I can find no direct contextual relevance.[52]

I conclude that, in the hands of Herodotus, the age-old story-teller's device of the flashback or analepsis has become a powerful instrument of historical narration.[53]

[50] Here I again disagree with Legrand, who finds the parallel superficial, introduced by Herodotus in order to make a transition to information he wanted to include ((1942) 47).

[51] Legrand's qualification of this analepsis as an 'hors-d'œuvre' ((1942) 47) does not do justice to its relevance.

[52] For a suggestion, see Ch. 14, p. 326.

[53] I wish to thank the members of the Hellenistenclub for their comments, Mrs B. Fasting for her correction of my English, Hans van Wees for invaluable help with the—last minute—translation of the many German quotations in my text.

CHAPTER TWELVE

'I DIDN'T GIVE MY OWN GENEALOGY': HERODOTUS AND THE AUTHORIAL PERSONA

Carolyn Dewald

In the course of Book Two, where Herodotus is somewhat more forthcoming than usual about his own investigatory practices, he mentions that he repeated the visit that Hecataeus had made several generations earlier, to see the priests lined up in their austere rows in the temple of Amon-re at Karnak (Thebes). He comments that Hecataeus had told the Egyptians that he was the sixteenth-generation descendant of a god, and that the priests in response had shown Hecataeus 345 statues, lined up in a row, of priests descended from earlier priests—each of them a *pirōmis*, Egyptian for something like noble man, but hardly a god. Then Herodotus, in one of the most spontaneous moments of self-expression in the whole *Histories*, says, 'and they showed the same thing to me, *emoi ou geneēlogēsanti emeōuton*, although I didn't give my own genealogy' (2.143.1).

Indeed, he does not. Although his authorial, first-person voice plays a prominent part in the *Histories*, Herodotus does not tell us anything about his family or his ethnic affiliations.[1] Armed with scraps of ancient gossip, we can choose to interpret as significant our impression that Herodotus himself is less than dazzled by most of the Ionians (except possibly the Samians), that he is interested in and respectful of Carian accomplishment, that he has a soft spot for the valiant Halicarnassian queen Artemisia, and that he certainly seems to know a lot of local details from the area of the Aegean coast around Halicarnassus.[2] But he does not encourage us to draw con-

[1] If Jacoby (1956) 225 is right, that Herodotus wrote 'Herodotus of Thurii' in his first sentence (Aristotle's version of the proem, *Rhet.* 1409a), nothing in the text would make explicit that he was a Dorian from Halicarnassus. For a discussion of 2.143 in terms of Herodotus' possible dependence on Hecataeus, see Lloyd (1988a) 107–8; cf. the scepticism of West (1991) 147–51.

[2] E.g., Ionians: 1.143, 4.142, 5.69, 5.97, 6.13; Samians: 3.60, but see 6.13; Carians and Pedasa: 1.171.1, 1.175–6, 2.152, 5.118–19, 6.20, 8.104–5; Artemisia: 7.99, 8.68,

clusions from these impressions; quite the contrary, the narrator or 'I' of the narrative who tells the *Histories* tacitly situates himself as a professional outsider, someone who knows many things about many peoples, not just Greeks but barbarians as well. Although many times he interjects himself as an 'I' into the narrative, he does so in what is at base a profoundly non-autobiographical voice that does not depict the author himself as a person with local ties and an insider's attachment to the immediate context under consideration. It is instead an early version of the 'Expert's Persona'—a voice that owes much of its credibility to the fact that it is detached, austere, non-personal in its intellectual engagement with the material it narrates.[3]

This fact has both bad and good consequences for us. Unfortunately, it means that Herodotus leaves us guessing at much about the inception of the genre he began that we would very much like to know. What did he have in mind to do, when he started to write? What literary antecedents or ethnic traditions shaped his attitudes to the world, and to the text he wanted to produce? If we knew some of these answers, we could begin to formulate answers to the more basic questions they raise in turn: did he intend his work to be at base a constructed and thus implicitly persuasive form of narrative, with all the (rhetorical) possibilities for invention that entails? Or was it instead his intent to produce a neutral, impartial, and, as much as possible, transparent account of past human social realities? Unlike Thucydides (1.21–2), Herodotus does not tell us.[4]

8.87, 8.93, 8.101; Halicarnassus: 1.144, 3.7, 9.107. Cf. his references to Pedasa (above); Cnidus: 1.174; Cos: 7.163–4, 9.76; Labraunda: 5.119. On Artemisia, see also Blok, this volume (Ch. 10, pp. 240–41).

[3] For possible generic antecedents and connections for this authorial voice, see de Jong (1987) 97, and (1999) 223, 227–9, Detienne (1967) 81–143, Nagy (1990) 224–35, Calame (1995) 77–96, Fowler (1996), Boedeker (2000). For some of the fifth-century intellectual and political contexts possibly relevant to Herodotus' biography, see e.g., Forrest (1984), Raaflaub (1987), Ostwald (1991), Stadter (1992), Thomas (1993), Moles (1996). Thomas (2000) appeared after this article was largely complete; she explores what I have here called Herodotus' 'expert's persona' in the context of the intellectual presuppositions and epideictic stylistic conventions of the first sophistic and contemporary scientific debate. See also Fowler (1996) 79 n. 118 and Cartledge and Greenwood, this volume (Ch. 15).

[4] These issues continue to occupy historiographers today. For what might be entailed by a 'serious, impartial and responsible account,' see, e.g., Veyne (1971), Mink (1987), White (1978), (1987), Appleby, Hunt, and Jacob (1994), Berkhofer (1995), and the scholarly exchange about historical narrative in the journal *Past and Present* in 1991 and 1992 by P. Joyce, C. Kelly, L. Stone, and G. Spiegel. Berkhofer (p. 3) sums up the form of the question as it is posed in contemporary postmod-

On the other hand, on the positive side, if we look closely at his persona, the presentation in the text of the authorial, expert 'I', we see elements in it suggesting that both strategies—the *Histories* as an overtly constructed account, the *Histories* as the transmission of relatively neutral and trustworthy information—are present and even necessarily commingled in this first historical text. Each is necessary to the implicit narrative contract that Herodotus establishes with us, his readers, from the outset. How the tension between them is established and sustained—even, why it is necessary—is something we can investigate by looking at how the authorial 'I' in Herodotus' text works in action.

To begin at the beginning: in the first sentence, an impersonal (unidentified) voice states that *hēde* (a deictic, pointing to the work before us) is the *apodexis* ('demonstration', 'publication') of the *historiē* ('investigation') of Herodotus.[5] This initial declarative statement is immediately followed by a couple of purpose clauses setting out the aims of this work: the preservation and celebration of the human past and its astounding achievements, including in particular why Greeks and barbarians went to war with one another (1.1). What follows is not, however, what we or even Thucydides might call a conventionally historical, straightforward, and avowedly trustworthy version of past events. Instead, the narrator (presumably Herodotus, but still unidentified in the second sentence as an 'I') sets up a division between what he knows and says in his own voice because he knows it, and the *logoi* or stories of others. First he recounts what Persian *logioi* or 'experts' say about the origins of Greco-barbarian conflict in the very distant past, concerning the abduction of four mythic heroines, Io, Europa, Medea, and Helen, Greek women by barbarians and barbarian women by Greeks; after this, he adds an alternative, Phoenician, version of the abduction of Io. Only after recounting what Persian *logioi* and Phoenicians have said about these distant and dubious doings does he conclude his proem with its first overtly first-person statement:

ernist criticism: 'To what extent can historians combine the two meanings of history as actual past and modern representation when all we know of language seemingly subverts that very goal?' For Herodotus as the fashioner of a rhetoric of history, see Hartog (1980/88), and a helpful overview of the larger debate begun by Fehling (1971) in Boedeker (2000).

[5] On these terms, the deictic, and on the Proem in general, see Bakker, this volume (Ch. 1), esp. pp. 29–30.

> But I am not going to say about these matters that they occurred one way or the other, but the man I know (*oida*) first began unjust deeds against the Greeks, indicating him I will proceed farther into the *logos*, going alike through small and big communities of humankind. For what was before big has mostly become small, and what was big in my time was earlier small. So knowing that human happiness never stays in the same place, I will recount both alike.[6]

This initial narrative strategy has often been read as an implicit reassurance to the reader that here at the beginning of the work the author is thinking historically, because it tacitly declares that he dismisses old myths of dubious value and intends to start his account instead in the *spatium historicum*, the time in the relatively recent past for which one can say one knows things with certainty.[7] Certainly, if the 'I' of the narrative had firmly gone on from this first move of rhetorical praeterition firmly to abjure all ancient, mythic *logoi* and to indicate that the narrative to follow would have accuracy, magnitude, and comprehensiveness as its goals, Herodotus' proem as it stands would be unexceptionably historical.[8] But that is not what he does, either in theory or in practice. What seems to make the Persian and Phoenician stories suspect in context is not their extreme antiquity, the oddness of their causal explanations, or their dubious historical status as rationalized myths. What the narrative highlights by labelling them variant versions of the same story, with the (unspoken) Greek myths looming faintly visible behind them, is rather that they are overtly both partial and partisan: Persians tell a version of the distant past designed to exonerate Persians from the responsibility for beginning the enmity between East and West; Phoenicians add only a detail that exonerates Phoenicians.[9]

Thus what emerges as the first narrative move in Herodotus' *Histories* is less the articulation of a conventionally 'historical' time

[6] 1.5; translations of Herodotus throughout this chapter are my own.

[7] Von Leyden (1949–50) 95 cites Jacoby (1956) 99 for this idea; cf. Dewald (1999) 229 n. 16 and Marincola (1999) 285 n. 13. See also Boedeker, this volume (Ch. 5 n. 43) as well as Raaflaub (Ch. 7, n. 36), Cobet (Ch. 17, n. 55), and Osborne (Ch. 22).

[8] Berkhofer (1995) 50–1 cites Cronon's (1992) 1371 list: depth, breadth, elegance, inclusiveness, coherence, and, most important, accuracy. Cf. what Appleby, Hunt, and Jacob (1994) 247–61 call the objectivity of a 'practical realism'.

[9] Moreover, Herodotus begins his next narrative not with Croesus himself but with another romantic story from the distant past, this time about Croesus' distant ancestor Gyges. The narratological implications are developed more fully in Dewald (1999) 224–33; cf. Fowler (1996) 84–6 for the possibility that Herodotus was reporting real sources.

or subject matter than the creation of an initial binary division between two different voices. The first is the narrator himself, someone who knows things and in (re)telling stories tacitly notes but stands apart from partisanship. Also present, constituting a second and quite different kind of voice, is the series of tacitly focalized *logoi* of his informants, retold by Herodotus in all their vivid and perhaps partisan particularity.[10] Even as he retells the stories from the distant past told by foreign experts, the first move of Herodotus as the authorial 'I' of the text indicates to us that he will not necessarily believe that such *logoi* tell the truth, because they are quite likely to be tendentious and self-serving. This is a rhetorical stance implicitly sustained throughout the narrative to come. Herodotus will go to some lengths to tell the best version possible of the *logoi* he has heard (or read; he does not distinguish the two), but he will not abandon the initial rhetorical distinction drawn between his own voice and that of the material he retells from others.[11]

This strong demarcation of his own voice as qualitatively different from what he has got from others lay behind my decision, in the mid-1980s, to investigate the authorial 'I' in Herodotus.[12] I began by trying to see the range of the expressions Herodotus uses to articulate his own authorial presence in the narrative, cataloguing 1,086 first-person comments according to four different ways in which I saw Herodotus interacting with his material: as a bystander, as a investigator, as a critic, and as a narrator. The basic image I used in 1987 was of Herodotus as a Menelaus-like figure struggling with the 'Protean' *logoi*, forcing them to reveal what truths they contained. The four ways in which he engaged with the *logoi* I discussed as four different kinds of handholds used to subdue the *logoi* to his will. This approach still has something to recommend it, especially in its recognition of the sharp distinction that Herodotus often makes separating his own voice from that of his sources, and the variety of different

[10] Dewald (1999) 229–33 discusses the difficulty of knowing in any passage precisely where the voice of Herodotus as narrator gives way to the focalization of a narrated *logos*.

[11] See Lateiner (1989) 101–2 for Herodotus' (possible) written sources and West (1985) for his use of epigraphy; for his own statements about writing, see Hartog (1988) 277–89 and Edmunds (1993) 835 (comparing him to Thucydides). De Jong (1999) points out that, although writing is referred to (e.g., 2.123), most of Herodotus' comments as a narrator are those of 'un narrateur qui parle plutôt qu'un narrateur qui écrit'.

[12] Dewald (1987) 147–70.

judgments he makes as an authorial persona in the text. However, it no longer seems to me adequately to sum up Herodotus' engagement as an 'I' with his text, precisely because it takes at face value the binary division between narrator and narrated *logoi* that Herodotus as narrator often insists upon.[13]

But if one instead broadens the notion of authorial presence to include not only the overt first-person pronouns and verbs but also all of the places where the authorial 'I' is effectively present as a tacit register of authoritative control over what is being recounted, as narratology has taught us now to do, the picture one forms of Herodotus' authorial interventions is more complex than this initial binary separation into narrator and focalized *logoi* suggests.[14] For although Herodotus goes to considerable pains to establish the idea that the text straightforwardly alternates between his own voice and judgment and the narration of stories he has heard, simultaneously a different and more complicated set of narrative relations between author and text is also present. If we look closely, Herodotus engages with the text not only as a narrator and critic of the *logoi* of others, but also as an author, constructing a narrative of his own of a new and different kind. In this chapter I will (at the risk of some anachronism) reserve the use of the term *histōr* for this second kind of authorial engagement as an 'I' in the text.[15]

Both registers, the 'I' of the narrator and the 'I' of the *histōr*, are crucial to the way the genre of history itself later develops, although

[13] It is much clearer to me now than it was a decade ago that this material is highly labile and will order itself in any number of different legitimate configurations, depending on the scholarly questions uppermost in the investigator's mind. Other important studies of Herodotus' authorial first person include Hartog (1980), Darbo-Peschanski (1987), Lateiner (1989), Marincola (1987) and (1999), Fowler (1996), de Jong (1999), Thomas (2000), and Munson (2001).

[14] For some of the more important narratological studies, including in particular those analysing ancient historical narratives, see Dewald (1999) 223 n. 4. Calame (1995) 78–96, Bakker (1997d), Gribble (1998), and de Jong (1999) should be added to the list of authors cited there.

[15] In Dewald (1987) 153 I used the term *histōr* to signify the whole of Herodotus' authorial persona. I use it here more narrowly, to signify the register of the authorial voice that conveys and tests information about the world; this is the part of Herodotus' authorial 'I' that Thucydides and other historians after him will adopt as the basis of their own authorial personas as historians (cf. n. 28 below). Cf. Evans (1990) 94–5, who doubts the usefulness of the term *histōr* altogether, but see also Nagy (1990) 250–73, Connor (1993) 3 n. 5, and Darbo-Peschanski (1995) 179–81. The term is technically anachronistic for Herodotus, but useful in that it points toward (but is not identical to) the later more developed persona of the 'historian'. Further discussion of *histōr* in Bakker, this volume (Ch. 1, pp. 14–16).

in quite different ways. Both establish quite far-reaching interpretive connections within the ongoing text of the *Histories*, affecting our readerly understanding of the third-person narrative, and together they anticipate the epistemological and ethical complexities raised by the status of history as a human science discussed above. As we have already seen in considering the *Histories*' proem, the narrator's initial 'I' on the one hand articulates the narrative structure to come as a binary one: material initially received from others is told and to a certain extent arranged and critiqued by Herodotus himself. The *histōr*'s 'I,' however, engages us as readers with a quite different set of concerns: it criticizes bits of information as data, but it also communicates, supplements, and ultimately interprets the narrated content of the *logoi* as a responsible, straightforward, and ongoing representation of *ta anthrōpēia prēgmata*, the human world (2.4.1). When Herodotus uses this second authorial register, he treats the contents of the *Histories* not as a set of stories drawn from a variety of different and contestable sources, but rather as parts of a continuous narrative that has become in effect Herodotus' own account of a real, lived human past.

The two modes or authorial registers overlap to some degree, of course, but they are also fairly easy to distinguish from each other conceptually. Herodotus asks us as readers to attend simultaneously to both registers: to confront the contents of the *Histories* as narrated *logoi* taken from outside sources, arranged and critiqued by Herodotus himself, but at the same time to read the text as a whole as his own ongoing, seriously investigated account of the cultures and events that produced the Persian Wars.

Here we shall briefly explore each register of the authorial 'I' in turn (for the sake of simplicity I will call them two voices, narrator and *histōr*) and then attempt to put them back together, acknowledging that, after all, the same 'I' speaks for them both. As we shall see, paradoxically it is the voice of the narrator, overtly distancing himself from the *logoi* he has gathered, that makes possible the responsible authority of the *histōr*; it is the *histōr*'s voice, on the other hand, that makes us see the narrator's efforts as ultimately more than mere entertainment, because the *logoi* he retells also become, within the ongoing framework established by the *histōr*, important data that together comprise an ongoing account about real human communities told by Herodotus himself.

Herodotus as Narrator: Managing the Logoi

Herodotus' basic move as a first-person presence in his text is to articulate for the reader the rudiments of how he sees his role as a narrator of *logoi* gathered from others. In hundreds of metanarrative statements scattered throughout the *Histories* he confirms what we have already gathered from the proem, that he has heard many *logoi* from others and that he is in charge of deciding which *logoi* to include and how to retell them. An almost random sample drawn from all nine books gives some idea of the range of expressions that affirm one or both of these functions: '[n]ow as some of the Persians say, those not wanting to glorify the Cyrus account but to tell the real story, this is the version I will write, although I also know how to say three other paths of story concerning Cyrus' (1.95); 'but of the other Heracles, whom the Greeks know, I was unable to hear anywhere from an Egyptian' (2.43.1); 'but this *logos* too is told, to me not trustworthy, that some one of the Persian women came visiting the wives of Cyrus . . .' (3.3); '[t]he vision of the dream of Hipparchus and the origins of the Gephuraei, the family of the slayers of Hipparchus, have been told by me. But it is necessary in addition to these things still to return to the *logos* I set out to tell at the outset, how the Athenians were freed from tyranny' (5.62); 'I write according to what the rest of the Greeks say' (6.53); 'although I have to say what is said, I am not at all obliged to believe it, and this declaration on my part is to hold for the whole narrative (*es panta logon*)' (7.152.3), '[h]ow Artabazus was aided by Timoxenus the Scionian general . . . I can't say (for it is not reported), but finally such things happened' (8.128).

Such comments indicate how Herodotus wants us to understand his own fundamental function in the text: he retells *logoi* he has heard. He acknowledges the existence of sources and both their strengths and their limitations as purveyors of information throughout the text, although admittedly on a sporadic basis (e.g., 1.214.5, 4.16.2, 8.135.1, 9.16.1).[16] He also informs us in passing about various kinds of editorial control he exerts upon what he recounts. He tells us that he chooses to end one *logos* and begin another, he cuts

[16] Fowler (1996) 77 suggests that the citation of sources may be an innovation of Herodotus' own, judging from the surviving fragments of other early writers like Hecataeus, Acusilaus, and Pherecydes.

logoi short, or lengthens them, sometimes telling us why (2.117, 2.135.6, 3.60.1, 4.14.1, 7.100). He briefly and usually quite generally judges the quality of what he retells as information, sometimes stating that something must be said or, on the contrary, can be bypassed (2.86.2, 5.62.1, 7.96.1, 7.187, 8.85.3). He includes variant versions of the same story (3.9.2, 4.11.1, 8.119, 9.74), and acknowledges cross-references, places in his text where something being narrated is relevant to an earlier or later passage (2.161.3, 5.36, 9.32.2), or states that he is returning to an earlier topic (4.82, 5.62, 7.137, 7.171).[17] Occasionally he views the *logoi* he retells as having a mind of their own, that heads the ongoing narrative off in a particular direction (1.95, 4.30). However, he pointedly omits heuresis, invention, from this repertoire of narrative moves but rather emphasizes again and again that what follows has been told to him by others (9.84).[18]

He expresses this idea not only in the overt first-person comments, but also through other, less obtrusive metanarrative expressions as well. There is an enormous additional amount of metanarrative comment spread throughout all nine books that is not explicitly added by the first-person narrator *per se*, but nonetheless confirms and extends the idea that his principal function is to act as a hearer and reteller of the *logoi* of others. 200 times a narrative segment begins or is allowed to continue by the simple expedient of announcing that someone says something ('the Athenians say . . .', 'the Corinthians say . . .', 'the Ammonians say . . .', 'the Carthaginians say . . .'). Another 111 times the passive *legetai*, 'it is said' is similarly used, generally to extend or amplify an ongoing narrative. Each time this metanarrative move occurs, the reader has again tacitly encountered Herodotus as narrator, although here in a self-effacing mode, implicitly reminding us that he retells *logoi* gathered from elsewhere.

For the future of the genre he begins, it is important to see that this is not just a move exonerating Herodotus from responsibility (although this is apparently how Plutarch later reads it in the *de Herodoti malignitate, Mor.* 856c). For Herodotus makes clear his belief

[17] Alternate or variant versions of the same account often involve the authorial voice as a narrator of *logoi* but simultaneously as a *histōr* assessing (*logoi* as) data as well; cf. n. 25 below and esp. Lateiner (1989) 82–90.

[18] Thus de Jong (1999) 220–3 describes this narrator as heterodiegetic (following the terminology of Genette and Bal). Cf. Dewald (1999) 224 n. 7. See also Ch. 11 of this volume. On the question of sources, see also Hornblower (Ch. 16), this volume.

that there are limits to what he can say, limits that the *logoi* themselves define. That is, the *logoi* of others that provide the basic narrative content of the *Histories* are presented by their narrator-author, Herodotus, as things out in the world. To use Bakhtin's term, this is a profoundly dialogic move: it makes central to the *Histories* the otherness of Herodotus' multiple informants as voices he has listened to and is transmitting in turn to us. In Herodotus' narrative we are apparently encountering the polyvocalism of the world itself.[19]

These rather simple rhetorical moves repeatedly distinguishing the narrator from what he claims to retell also cumulatively articulate how Herodotus wants us as readers to perceive the *Histories*' fundamental narrative structure. As Immerwahr showed us almost forty years ago, the *Histories* is overtly articulated as a continuous paratactic sequence of narrative units, each introduced and concluded by a quasi-formular sentence whose chief function is to mark that a new unit (or sub-unit within a unit) is beginning or ending; Rosaria Munson has demonstrated that each narrative unit contains a formulaic introductory or concluding sentence that acts as a metanarrative gloss reconfirming the binary division between the voice of the narrator and that of the *logoi* that we have been exploring here.[20] By announcing to us that yet another narrative segment is either beginning or ending, the formular introductory and concluding sentences of the various narrative units also tacitly confirm the presence of Herodotus as a helpful guide to the ongoing chain of narratives he retells. He intrudes at the end of one segment and the beginning of the next with comments to help us as readers to make sense of what we read, as we proceed along the *logōn hodos* (1.95.1), and to trust that there is a discursive shape in what might otherwise be a puzzling, amorphous jumble of disparate stories.

Thus the narrator's 'I' has two important functions. First, it allows the notion to emerge of the *logoi* of others as objects, themselves part

[19] Dewald (1999) 247. For the importance of this move to the invention of history as a genre, see Meier's (1987) 45 description of the *Histories* as a 'multi-subjective account'. Cf. Berkhofer (1995) 28–31, 36–40 on the related problem of 'reconstructing the plenitude of the Great Story'. On 'dialogism' in Herodotus' *historiē*, see also Bakker, this volume (Ch. 1, p. 18).

[20] Immerwahr (1966); Munson (1983) and (2001). See also de Jong (Ch. 11, this volume). Herodotus, however, rarely specifies that the *logoi* demarcated by formular beginning and ending sentences are precisely the same thing as the *logoi* he has heard from others and is narrating in his text. Presumably the nature of *logos* itself, in an oral world, discourages clear attribution of ownership. See also n. 10 above.

of the phenomenal world, that can be retold but also examined and commented upon as objects worthy of attention. Second, it provides us with a way to understand the wildly heterogeneous collection of material in the *Histories* as a roughly sequential chain of continuous *logoi*, arranged for us by Herodotus himself, but not invented by him.

Herodotus as Histōr: *Representation of Data*

Herodotus' voice as a *histōr* has a function in the text quite different from that of the narrator. In 1987 I divided the cluster of authorial 'I' comments I am now calling the *histōr* into three separate and distinct categories (the investigator, the critic, the bystander); narratological tools in wide use today, however, help us see all of these functions instead as interlinked and mutually dependent parts of a single authorial register or voice. When he uses it, Herodotus is not acting as a narrator, that is, arranger, critic, and reteller of *logoi* others have given him, but is rather a helpful assessor/expositor of facts about the world that, together with the *logoi* he retells, grid for the reader the phenomena that are being described in the ongoing narrative as different aspects of a single interlocking whole.[21]

At its simplest, this is a persona that is well known in the genre of oral storytelling. To cite a contemporary example, Richard Bauman, the American ethnographer and folklorist, describes the extensive changes that occurred in one well known American story-teller's performances between 1967 and 1982.[22] During this time the story-teller in question, Ed Bell, continued to tell the locally-based tall tales he had initially told to his clients and neighbours at his fishing camp at Indianola, but in the later versions telling them at substantially greater length. When Bauman caught up with him after more than fifteen years as a noted performer at urban folk festivals, and found the stories much longer than they had originally been, Ed Bell explained, '[d]own on the coast, everybody knew all this stuff, so I didn't have to describe it in detail. I go into more detail, now, to

[21] Good descriptions of this integrating authorial imagination are found in Immerwahr (1966) 306–26; Hartog (1988) 341–60; Gould (1989).

[22] Bauman (1986) 78–111, esp. 103. See also Stadter (1997) 7, who very suggestively compares the Jack tales of the North Carolina oral narrative tradition to Herodotus' 'pan-Hellenic account which could speak to a variety of persons'.

be sure'. Bauman consequently entitled one of his chapters, describing a narratorial mode much like a simplified form of Herodotus' *histōr*'s persona, 'I go into more detail now, to be sure.' Stripped to its essentials, this voice can be characterized as one of helpful supplementation of the narrative, fleshing it out, making it more comprehensible to the reader.

Herodotus' quasi-autobiographical comments about his own efforts as an investigator provide his most explicitly personal and engaged expressions as a *histōr*. In Book Two especially, Herodotus presents himself in his own text almost as an actor, certainly as the initiator, guide, and discoverer of information. He expressly tells us in 2.99 that his general procedure is to rely on sight (*opsis*), reasoning (*gnōmē*) and inquiry (*historiē*). As John Marincola comments, in Book Two, '[h]e has gone to great pains to find the sources of the Nile (2.19), checked to see if the various reports of priests agree with one another (2.3), asked about the origin of the god Heracles (2.44) and heard from the priests themselves of the antiquity of Egypt and her rulers (2.99). In Book Two Herodotus *explicitly* states and places before our eyes his participation in the process of inquiry. The impression of a conversation is at times further achieved by the quotation of long passages of the stories of the priests in indirect discourse'.[23]

Marincola argues that this very personal, assertive, quasi-autobiographical persona is heavily polemical, often or even usually in evidence where Herodotus is correcting or improving a specific prior account. That may well be right; it is certainly true that this particular version of the investigating, supplemental *histōr*'s voice occurs most frequently in Book Two, where Herodotus seems frequently to abandon structuring his account as a sequence of *logoi*, providing instead his own enormous ethnographic survey of the land, flora, fauna, and customs of the Egyptians. I would add only to Marincola's observations about the controversial, combative flavour of Herodotus' quasi-autobiographical investigatory observations that there is also something of an air of paradox about many of them. Frequently Herodotus says that he himself went somewhere, or saw something, in order to provide us the assurance that something odd or unexpected is nonetheless to be taken seriously, because he himself has

[23] Marincola (1987) 127–8; see also Fornara (1971a) 18–23, Dewald (1987) 155–9, and n. 25 below.

seen it. Sometimes *opsis* and interview are used together to destroy an inadequate set of previous assumptions, without themselves generating a correct answer in its place (2.131, 2.143).[24]

The quasi-autobiographical 'I' that appears in the early parts of Book Two is often found linked with a second and much more pervasive aspect of Herodotus' voice as a *histōr*—one in which he discusses data and arguments critically. Of all the kinds of authorial intervention we are looking at here, this one is closest to and perhaps even responsible for the later development of the generically conventional historian's persona: the investigator who tests data before including it in his or her own historical account. We should note that this part of Herodotus' authorial voice, the critical *histōr*, often cannot be completely separated from his voice as a narrator, editing and assessing *logoi*. The critical *histōr*, however, emphasizes facts and arguments about data rather than his own engagement in the reporting and assessing of *logoi*, and the construction of his own account out of *logoi*.[25]

At least superficially, Herodotus' critical comments about the truth or likelihood of some phenomenon provide an authorial rhetoric of assurance, authority, and control over data. On a handful of occasions he says he knows something. But much more common than expressions of certainty are various forms of opinion, ranging from qualified belief to outright disbelief. As a *histōr* Herodotus does not assess or argue the probability of large stretches of narrative (as we have seen, these he fundamentally defines as material he is reporting, and he controls them as a narrator), but he does speculate about and provisionally judge individual details: the Persian conspirators really did debate establishing a democratic government (3.80.1, 6.43.3), a silver bowl at Delphi might well have been made by Theodorus (1.51), Scyllias probably did not swim to Artemisium (8.8.2); Anacharsis definitely did not praise the moderation of Spartan speech (4.77). Many of the longer discussions of this type occur in Books Two and Four and concern details of natural history or ethnography. Beyond Book Four, he more frequently questions the motive an individual

[24] Dewald (1987) 158. Cf. Dewald (1993) 59, 67–70.

[25] See Lateiner (1989) 78–90 for Herodotean source criticism. When undertaking 'source criticism' Herodotus is often expressing himself as both narrator and *histōr* simultaneously. See Fowler (1996) 80–6 for a good assessment of Fehling's (1989) analysis of Herodotus' sources and source criticism as largely invented. See also Hornblower, this volume (Ch. 16).

might have had to do something, the correct calculation of numbers, or matters of religion or gnomic judgment.[26]

Both Donald Lateiner and Catherine Darbo-Peschanski have studied the implications of this aspect of Herodotus' authorial 'I' in some detail, but they place different emphases on what they have seen. Lateiner has considered in particular the passages where Herodotus says he cannot ascertain something, or has to conjecture because hard data was missing, or is disinclined to treat something trivial or of a religious nature. As we have seen, he also focuses on alternative versions of the same story, in particular where Herodotus discusses the validity of various sources of information, some of them probably written.[27] For Lateiner, such statements make Herodotus the quintessential historian, because they provide the ethical reassurance that allows the reader to trust that what has been narrated was arrived at by serious, sober research and not divine inspiration or novelistic flights of fancy.[28]

Catherine Darbo-Peschanski, on the other hand, builds on the work of Hartog but expands the scope of his structuralist inquiry into Herodotus' language by interpreting it as the language of a quasi-philosophical, even sophistic, rhetoric. She uses virtually the same material as Lateiner to emphasize that with his critical comments as a *histōr* Herodotus is designing a persona that eschews certitude as something not available in the human world. She discusses how Herodotus uses arguments from signs, arguments from analogy, and deductive arguments from hypothetical propositions to get at what is, in his opinion, most likely in any given instance.[29] But she

[26] Lateiner (1989) 55–75. Cf. Verdin (1971), Weber (1976), Strasburger (1982a) 838–81, Packman (1991) 359–408, Thomas (1997) and (2000) 168–212. Connor (1993) 9 argues that Herodotus' critical authorial role is comparable to that of the archaic *histōr* or legal arbitrator. For statements of knowledge, see Lateiner (1989) 71. Cf. Darbo-Peschanski (1987) 165–84, Dewald (1989) 160–1.

[27] Lateiner (1989) 69–75; cf. n. 17 above.

[28] 'For historians the ethical core of their professional commitment has always been a belief that their arduous, often tedious labour yields some authentic knowledge of the dead "other", a knowledge admittedly shaped by the historian's own perceptions and biases, but nonetheless retaining a degree of autonomy, in the sense that it cannot (putatively) be made entirely to bend to the historian's will,' Spiegel (1992) 196. Cf. Berkhofer (1995) 66–70, but see also Appleby, Hunt, and Jacob (1994) 254–61. For the importance of the historian's character in the ancient world, see Marincola (1997) 128–74.

[29] Darbo-Peschanski (1987) 137–53; the category of 'refutations' is also interesting in this context, p. 154.

stresses that this latter qualification is crucially important. That is, Herodotus constructs a narrative in which his conclusion will remain, in each particular passage, only *his* opinion—and one, moreover, that holds only for the immediate discussion at hand. No individual argument is extended to become more broadly applicable, as Thucydides claims will be the case for his own thought processes. Herodotus refuses a universal system of reasoning, applicable in all cases, and, more broadly, he renounces, in his critical persona as a *histōr*, a hold on truth, anchoring his work instead in the 'realm of opinion'.[30]

So far, we have considered two of Herodotus' stances as a *histōr* of data, those I earlier labelled 'investigator' and 'critic'. Darbo-Peschanski's take on the *histōr's* comments as a critic allows us to think in interesting ways about a third and more amorphous group of first-person authorial comments, those where he reacts as an interested and vaguely responsive bystander to something the third-person narrative reports. If Darbo-Peschanski is right, and Herodotus' comments as a *histōr* of data are not meant primarily to increase accuracy and precision, and hence our trust in the factual truth of what he recounts, but rather to remind us that he is putting his own judgment out *es meson*, along with those of his informants and his readers, then this group of relatively unobtrusive comments, responsive rather than critical, are some of the most important of all; they serve to anchor Herodotus' first-person generalized and modest alertness as a *histōr* far down within the fabric of the ongoing narrated text. Four groups of spontaneous authorial comment occur with some frequency: *tōn hēmeis idmen* with a correlative or superlative, *es eme*, statements of wonder, and statements of praise and blame.[31]

Herodotus uses a correlative or a superlative with *tōn hēmeis idmen* in order to say that something is extraordinary, the first or best or most extreme in some way: Croesus is 'the first barbarian of whom we know' to subdue Greek cities (1.5); the Ethiopian Troglodytes, whose language sounds like the squeak of a bat, are the fastest men

[30] Darbo-Peschanski (1987) 164–88, esp. 184–8. Thomas (1993, 2000) stresses the similarities between Herodotus and the early Hippocratic writers and suggests that their eristic discourse represented the way serious scientific inquiry worked in the fifth century BC.

[31] To the bibliography in Dewald (1987) 155 nn. 20–1 add Hartog (1988) 230–7, Redfield (1985), Bloomer (1993) 30–50 (on superlatives), Rösler (1991), Thomas (2000) 138–53.

in the world 'of whom we have heard by report' (4.183); Themistocles was the only man 'of whom we know' to receive an honorary escort from the Spartans (8.124); the crocodile of all animals we know of grows from the smallest beginnings into the largest size (2.68.2). Such comments, although relatively insignificant individually, have a cumulative effect that is important. They again show that the authorial judgment in play is one that is secular and social, not obtained as part of an unshakable tradition or by divine fiat. These superlatives express in an abbreviated form the diffidence that Herodotus insists on as a critic, in passages like 2.34, 4.192, or 4.197: 'to the greatest extent to which we in our investigations have been able to come'.

The same points can be made of his expressions of praise and blame, wonder, and 'to my time'. Praise and blame are, as Plutarch later complains, liberally bestowed on people for their actions in the *Histories*, but in the context of the ongoing narrative, not usually in Herodotus' own voice as a *histōr*.[32] When Herodotus overtly praises or blames something in the narrative in his own voice, it almost always concerns an intellectual accomplishment. Twelve of the fifteen most striking instances of praise concern intellectual or cultural achievement: particularly worthy laws, Egyptian judgment, Scythian cleverness in their modes of self-defence. Sixteen of the eighteen overt instances of authorial blame also concern an intellectual or cultural exploit: the Lacedaemonians are wrong to claim the bowl inscribed for them at Delphi (1.51). Ionians think inaccurately about Egypt (2.16), or want to become known for their cleverness (2.20, 24); the Greeks tell a silly *logos* about Heracles (2.45), an inaccurate one about Rhodopis (2.134) and about Polycrates (3.45). Herodotus laughs outright at the absurd efforts of map makers (4.36).

Herodotus promises in his proem to report things that are *thōmasta*, wonderful. He uses expressions of wonder to discuss things he himself believes exceptional; he justifies the length of his accounts of Egypt and Polycrates' Samos by pointing to the numbers of wonders these countries contain (2.35, 3.60); he notes the absence of wonders worth mentioning in Lydia and Scythia (1.93, 4.82). Wonder itself, however, includes a variety of different authorial attitudes within

[32] Plutarch, *Mor.* 856c–863; see Marincola (1994) 201–3. Thomas (2000) 242–8 rightly stresses that when one does not look specifically for the first person, but rather for the authorial register of the *histor*, his polemical reach becomes much more extensive and combative in a way that resembles early Hippocratic texts.

it; Herodotus wonders at spectacular achievements, at things he considers real but probably cannot explain, at portents and other supernatural manifestations, and, finally, at reports or *logoi* that he flatly disbelieves.[33]

Finally, over one hundred times Herodotus remarks that some phenomenon mentioned in the narrative survives *ep'eme* or *es eme*, 'to my own day', or that something exists *nun*, now. His mentions of his own time both connect Herodotus' own narrative present, the present of the onlooker, to the past that forms the subject matter of the *Histories*, and sharply distinguish it as separate.[34] Traces of the past continue to exist in the present: statues, tombs, temples, temple dedications, forts, and roads survive to Herodotus' own day, giving implicit testimony about the reality of the past events in which they were created. Similarly, festivals, habits of dress, and details of sacrifice, tribute, law, language, and culture survive in the present as the ritualized or formalized commemoration of some event in the past that gave them birth.[35] But Herodotus also recognizes that such traces of the past in the present can prove deceptive: the lurid story of paternal rape told of Mycerinus, king of Egypt, was the work of *phluēreontes*, babblers, because the statues lacking hands that were supposedly evidence of this ancient monstrosity were still to be seen in Herodotus' own day, with their hands merely broken off, lying in the sand at the statues' feet (2.131).

We have seen that as a narrator Herodotus eschews any claim of heuresis, invention of material. But if we really look closely at almost any extended passage in the *Histories*, a tacit extension of his *histōr*'s voice can be found on almost every page, that throws this basic claim of his narrator's voice into doubt. For if we acknowledge the extent and quality of helpful, sometimes critical, authorial supplementation to the narrative, it begins to look at many points as though the narrative itself is no longer definable as a series of *logoi* that

[33] In his wonder at incredible *logoi*, we are again venturing quite close to the register of his voice as narrator. See Munson (2001) for wonder as a basic Herodotean historiographic principle.

[34] Rösler (1991) argues that Herodotus locates his own time as that of a 'historical' past in relation to the time of his readers, and thus tacitly makes some of the claims for the permanence of his work that Thucydides after him does. See also Ch. 4, this volume, pp. 91–2.

[35] Kurt Raaflaub rightly points out to me that in this way they do implicitly testify to the fact that the events of which they are traces are still important and meaningful in shaping both the present and our understanding of it.

Herodotus narrates and looks at; it also, somehow, has become his own larger ongoing account. This is because, as a *histōr*, Herodotus presides over letting the material he narrates to us make sense.

This voice appears most prominently as an 'I' in the ethnographies, particularly at the beginnings of Books Two or Four, but not only there. Later in the text, in part building on its earlier prominence in the ethnographies, an implicit authorial register of this sort also suggests its presence, at least as a 'deviant focalization', whenever the ongoing narrative includes third-person statements of declarative helpfulness whose authority is not intended to be contested, filling in the blanks and helping us as readers understand what is going on and how to think about it.[36]

Consider, for instance, the following two passages, drawn almost at random from the narrative of events. Neither of them contains an extended expression of authorial intrusion as an 'I', but each of them contains the tone of communicative expansiveness that is found in the register of the author-as-*histōr*, supplementing the third-person narrative of events with additional information. The first passage occurs in Book Four; the list-like information that begins and ends the passage is directed by the *histōr* to the reader as part of an extended description of the land and people of Libya, prior to the narration of the *logos* about the Persian attempted conquest of that region during the reign of Darius. The italicized parts are those that most clearly (though tacitly) contain the helpful voice of the *histōr*, within the third-person account.

> *The Psylloi are the neighbours of the Nasamones.* These died out *in the following way*: the south wind blowing dried up their water reservoirs, and their whole land, *lying within the Syrtis*, was without water. But they taking counsel in a joint discussion marched on the south wind (I say what the Libyans say), and when they got to the sand, the south wind blowing buried them. Since they have all perished the Nasamones hold their land. *And below these to the south in the country of the wild animals live the Garamantes, who flee humankind and the acquaintance of anybody.* . . . (4.173–4)

[36] This part of the argument initially profited greatly from discussion with D. Fowler. See Fowler's (1990) discussion of deviant focalization, as well as *la 'voix off'* of Darbo-Peschanski (1987) 114–15; cf. Gribble (1998) 58–61 for Thucydidean 'deviant focalization'. I. de Jong, however, has pointed out to me that strictly speaking focalization should not be used of the authorial voice at all; that is why I have described it here in terms of 'register'. The subject clearly requires further discussion; cf. Rood (1998) 294–6.

Later in the *Histories*, such material tends to occur in passing, inside the narrative of events:

> But when Megabazus had taken the Paeonians, he sent seven Persian men as messengers to Macedonia, who after himself were the most respected in the army. And these were sent to Amyntas to request earth and water for Darius the king. *There is from the Prasiad lake a very direct way into Macedonia; for first right near the lake is the mine from which later came a talent of silver each day for Alexander, and after the mine [it is possible for] one crossing the mountain called Dusoron to be in Macedonia.* So when these Persians arrived, coming into the sight of Amyntas, they requested earth and water for Darius the king. (5.17–18)

Earlier we saw that when he is using his narrator's voice, Herodotus persuades us to think of the *Histories* as material retold from others (as in the comment 'I say what the Libyans say', in 4.173). And yet, in both the above passages, the actual content of the ongoing narrative includes a great deal of implicit material added by Herodotus as *histōr*, so extensively supplementing the bones of the stories (the fate of the Psylloi; the entry of the Persian ambassadors into Macedonia) that it becomes a qualitatively different kind of thing altogether—a narrative now written, in effect, by Herodotus himself. The comments that he adds of this sort, not obviously marked with the authorial 'I' but imparting its helpful, supplemental and fact-based flavour to the ongoing narrative nonetheless, severely modifies the narrator's insistence that Herodotus-the-author is merely at base retelling the *logoi* of others.

It is not clear that Herodotus and his immediate contemporaries (his original audiences, for instance) would have heard two distinct registers in his authorial voice. Perhaps in Herodotus' own day his comments as a *histōr* within the narrative were seen only as a set of helpful parenthetical remarks—making the narrative, like Ed Bell's tall stories, 'a little longer', in order to fill out for the particular audience details about the events and people narrated that would have remained incomprehensible without these addenda.[37] One could imagine Herodotus travelling around the Greek world, filling in for each audience as he went in his *histōr*'s voice the material that would enable them to understand and integrate into their local knowledge the parts of his *logoi* foreign to their own experience. This is certainly

[37] Cf. n. 21 and Nagy (1990) 306–7 on the Panhellenism of the *histōr*. Cf. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *de Thuc.* 5.

important; the communicative supplementarity of this voice has made much information available to us, his later readers, that might have remained incomprehensible, had Herodotus written only for insiders who knew what he was talking about. It may well be a large part of why, out of all of the old Ionian writers, Herodotus alone has been preserved for us. But its major importance was for the genre he began, since the fashioning of a narrative that unobtrusively explains the background details and causal connections underlying events as it goes along lies at the heart of what Thucydides and others after Herodotus went on to develop as the authorial voice of historical narrative.

This chapter began by noting Herodotus' refusal to tell his own genealogy, and with the idea that in his first-person authorial voice he fashioned an 'expert's persona' that owed its authority to the fact that the author/narrator remains an outsider to the text proper—in important ways, he insists it is not 'his' but his re-editing of *logoi* he has heard. This is a move abandoned by Thucydides and narrative historians thereafter, who construct instead one authoritative voice that presents the author simultaneously as critical narrator and *histōr* of his own narrative.

Herodotus' authorial persona remains an anomaly, therefore, but one with a certain odd spaciousness and idiosyncratic integrity. For Herodotus' procedures as an 'I' in his own text show that the question central to historiography raised at the beginning of the chapter—history as rhetoric, history as human science—has been there from the very beginning of the genre, since it is implicit in both kinds of focalization that Herodotus uses his authorial 'I' to communicate. I have tried to show that both the 'narrator' and the '*histōr*' are crucial to the way the later genre of history writing develops, but perhaps in ways not obvious from one's initial conception of these roles. The obvious division between the two voices of course would place the narrator's voice as the rhetorical one, and the *histōr*'s voice as the one that patiently collects and supplements it with data and also with a critical examination of details contained in the narrative. But we have seen that in one quite important respect the roles of the two voices are reversed. For it is when he is speaking as a narrator that Herodotus encodes into his text the sense of dialogism that is essential to the invention of history as a human science—insisting that the stories he recounts have been learned from

others and that their content is not a matter of his own invention, but one that can be examined critically by himself, and by us too. And although Thucydides, Xenophon, and others abandon this narrator's persona, collapsing the overt distinction between their own voices and those of their sources, the tacit assurance nonetheless remains that what we are reading in the *Histories* is not a single story but a composite account drawn from many previous narrators of events that have been communally lived through and remembered; it continues to be the narrator's 'I' that has tacitly selected the parts of their composite story worth retelling.

The voice of the narrator is also what makes possible the supplemental helpfulness of Herodotus' *histōr*'s voice—the hundreds of times he intervenes as an 'I' not to talk about the composition of the narrative as a collection of retold *logoi* but to respond as if some part of the content of the particular *logos* underway has serious claims to our attention as a reasonably veridical account, and one that is implicitly part of a larger, ongoing story that Herodotus himself presents. Here, to borrow a leaf from Herodotus' own notebook, I am not going to choose between the arguments of Lateiner and Darbo-Peschanski, but to regard them instead as variant versions, each of which has a good deal to recommend it. Darbo-Peschanski gets right, I think, the notion that Herodotus has fashioned a *histōr*'s persona for himself much of whose authority consists in the fact that it remains modest: secular, provisional, cautious in its truth claims. We are inclined to trust this voice because it is so open in its own firm declaration of tentative provisionality—and both halves of this oxymoron are necessary, for us to accord it our trust.[38]

On the other hand, what Lateiner's analysis captures is, ultimately, even more important. I have argued that the preface of the *Histories* does not necessarily create a conventional *spatium historicum*—a chronological time, say the reign of Croesus, at which serious Histories, as opposed to myth or legend, begins. But what Herodotus has ultimately done with his authorial voice, *both* critically retelling *logoi and* assessing, interpreting the material he recounts as data, is to create for us within the text the presence of his own alert and critical authorial consciousness as a *spatium historicum* in itself. The sense it makes

[38] Momigliano (1966) argues that it was not trusted until the era of European exploration, in the early modern period; see also Bowersock (1989).

does not yet lie as it does for Thucydides in patterns of quasi-predictable human behaviour to be impersonally deduced from data at hand. Instead, in hundreds of authorial gestures—themselves supported by a body of third-person supplemental information brought by the *histōr* to the *logoi*—Herodotus allows his own alert authorial persona to act as the interpretive frame within which the *logoi*, collected from all over the Eastern Mediterranean world, from the early sixth century down to his own day, fall into a meaningful and coherent set of relationships with one another, so that significant causal connections between one set of events and another can be drawn. Ultimately, as Thucydides and later historians after him saw, this permits the *histōr* himself to become narrator of an account that *in toto* is profoundly different in quality from the material from which it originally has been fashioned, whether we think of it as retold *logoi*, as individual pieces of more or less believable data, or as a blend of the two, as Herodotus himself seems to have done.

Thus history, in the hands of Herodotus its first practitioner, is resolutely binocular: both narrative and critique of narrative, both the voice of many others and the voice of the *histōr* himself in helpful supplementation. This in turn reveals a more basic truth about history writing as a genre, at least as Herodotus perceived it. It is clear from the way he handles them, both as a narrator and as a *histōr*, that Herodotus thinks *logoi* matter, because they are one of the best tools we have been given for understanding the world of *ta anthrōpēia prēgmata*. And despite the charm, the spontaneity and apparent delightfulness of much of the content of the *Histories*, the ultimate objective of its author, this expert's persona with which we began, is serious: to understand the human world, in all its dimensions. Throughout the *Histories*, people who take the trouble to be alert to their surroundings, to find things out, and to listen carefully to the *logoi* of others, fare better than those who go about the world not noticing what it is like, or the realities of their own place in it. Herodotus' authorial 'I' models a similarly intelligent behaviour; what he has given us finally is an ongoing account in which his own consciousness as an alert and secular 'I' constructs for us a field within which *logoi* more or less make sense, causal connections work, information is useful, and critical intelligence counts, both his own and that of actors inside the narrative.[39] As an authorial 'I' in his text,

[39] Christ (1994) 169–82.

both narrator and *histōr*, he persuades us that the doubleness of his overt authorial persona reflects his own efforts in the service of knowledge; in doing so he also models for us the doubleness of what thinking historically might mean.[40]

[40] This chapter was written and initially delivered at the Center for Hellenic Studies in Washington D.C., in the fall of 1999; I would like to thank the Center's fellows and its directors, Deborah Boedeker and Kurt Raaflaub, for their generous and incisive comments. I would like to thank as well the departments of Classics at Columbia University and Barnard College, the University of Chicago, the University of Pennsylvania, and the University of California at Berkeley, for opportunities to further sharpen my ideas. Special thanks are due to Egbert Bakker, Nancy Felson, Helene Foley, Irene de Jong, John Marincola, Susanne Saïd, Seth Schein, and Laura Slatkin.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

SHORT STORIES IN HERODOTUS' *HISTORIES*

Vivienne Gray

Problems of Definition

To survey short stories in Herodotus is to survey his entire narrative, since short stories exhibit its more general features and are part of its structure.[1] There is a need therefore to focus on their more distinctive qualities. Yet their definition is problematic.[2] Herodotus does not have a specialized word for his shorter narratives, but commonly describes them in terms of their actions.[3] Nor do scholars use a systematic terminology.[4] Some call them *logoi*, but these include many other types of narrative.[5] Others call them 'short stories', or 'novellas' after European practice.[6] The ancient novella has been defined as a change of fortune or characteristic behaviour, in real life and fixed in time, and of a length sufficient to round out the action.[7] But remarks on the modern short story provide a better definition than these. Herodotus' examples indeed make a more

[1] Many scholars use the short story to exemplify general features, but Thomson (1935), Long (1987), Cobet (1971), Erbse (1981, 1991, 1992) alone focus on it.

[2] Long (1987) 7 demurs. But Trenkner (1958) xiii defines 'novella' (below).

[3] 'A very great wonder': 1.23.1; 'the greatest revenge for injustice of those we know': 8.105.1; 'the man who won the tyranny in the following way': 8.137.1; 'the lust of Xerxes and the death of Masistes': 9.113.2; 'what happened about a deposit in Sparta' 6.86α.1.

[4] See also Ch. 11, pp. 255–8.

[5] Many refer to them as 'passages', 'episodes'. Thomson (1935) uses *logos* for the short story as well as other types of narrative. Immerwahr (1966) uses *logoi* for all types, calling short stories 'minor' *logoi*. Herodotus calls both stories and arguments *logoi* in reference to subject matter, as Immerwahr (1966), 14 n. 34 indicates. He sometimes calls a short story a '*logos*', in addition to the description of its action: 6.86α.1, d; or an *epos* for a story of a wise saying: 7.226.1–2. For more specialized ancient terms, which Herodotus does not use: Trenkner (1958) 5.

[6] Trenkner (1958): 'novella'. Long (1987): 'short story' as well as 'novella'. Erbse (1991, 1992): 'Novellen' for longer and 'Anekdoten' for shorter stories.

[7] Trenkner (1958) xiii–xiv, 11, 24. But Herodotus' reliance on oral traditions means that his stories are not 'imaginary' in Trenkner's fictitious sense.

coherent corpus for definition than the still-evolving modern form.[8]

The one major difference is that the modern short story stands in isolation, whereas Herodotus incorporates his short stories into a larger narrative. This raises the question of their organization within the work and their thematic relationships to their immediate contexts and the larger narrative. Some seem to 'drift free' of their contexts, while others seem to comment directly on them. Some seem to interact with other parts of the work. The three short stories that come at the end of the work have seemed to achieve thematic as well as structural closure.[9]

I leave their organization and relationships in the meantime and first focus on their definition. The short story is rather obviously defined by its length. Time limits on ancient oral performance or word limits on modern publication in print could explain this.[10] But the construction of a modern short story also differs from that of a longer one in that the writer grasps the totality before writing a single line of it: 'a distinctive form with its own methods of construction'.[11] There is an art which strives for concentration, singleness and wroughtness, a powerful and exacting form in which every word counts toward closure. The modern short story amasses its whole weight toward the ending,[12] and the closure or denouement is more concentrated than the anticipation or dilemma that precedes it. This distinctive narrative 'shape' makes a short story distinct from a story that happens to be short.[13]

This shape also defines Herodotus' short stories. Herodotus' momentum toward closure usually involves a crisis. Relevant to the notion of crisis is the concept of the 'functional' event which involves confrontation, opens a choice between two possibilities and produces changes involving either improvement or deterioration for the main character.[14] The famous musician Arion is the main character of a

[8] See Reid (1977) 1–4, 10–14, 16; Shaw (1983) 20–1, who concludes: 'a firm definition of the (modern) short story is impossible'. Shaw substitutes the question: 'What can a short story do particularly well *because* it is short?'.

[9] For a range of views: Gould (1989) 50–8; and on the closure n. 54 below.

[10] Shaw (1983) 7. But some of Herodotus' shorter stories are less than 300 words. It is hard to imagine an oral performance as restrictive as this.

[11] Shaw (1983) 3.

[12] Shaw (1983) 3, quoting Chekov; May (1995) 116.

[13] Shaw (1983) 9.

[14] Bal (1997) 182–93, esp. 182, 184, 185 f., 192 f., in relation to the *fabula*.

tightly-focussed double crisis short story (1.23–4). The crew of the ship that carries him back to the court of his patron Periander the tyrant of Corinth turn pirate, take the wealth he has earned in the West, and force him to make a choice that appears to be no choice, between death on board the ship and burial, or death overboard and a watery grave. In this crisis he promises to kill himself, asking only for permission to give a final performance of the music for which he is famous. He then throws himself overboard, apparently making the worse choice, but a dolphin picks him up and carries him to land at Taenarum. This denouement occupies a brief line or two, contrasting with the comparatively detailed anticipation of it. The miraculous rescue then leads to the second crisis, in which Arion reaches Corinth and tells Periander his story. Periander disbelieves him, detains him and waits to interrogate the crew on their return. They assert that they left him safe and sound in Taras, but Arion appears, to refute their story. The denouement is again brief and rapid in comparison with the anticipation. Candaules, in another short story of tightly-focussed double crisis (1.8–12), wants Gyges to see his wife naked in order to make him appreciate her beauty, and confronts him with a choice that is no choice (as Arion): to disobey his king or commit the indiscretion. Gyges chooses the indiscretion and resolves the first crisis. The consequence of this resolution is that the wife wants to resolve her shame and offers Gyges another choice that is no choice: to disobey his queen or kill the king (second crisis). Gyges kills the king and takes his queen. Again anticipation is much more extensive than outcome in both parts of the story.

The action of the short story need not be as physical as in the stories of Arion and Candaules. Croesus' refusal of the wise advice that Solon gives him is also a short story (1.29–33).[15] Solon comes to Croesus' court and three times answers the question about happiness that Croesus puts to him, each time more explicitly than the last. Croesus briefly rejects him three times, each time showing greater ignorance. Solon's advice is a functional event that offers choice, there is confrontation, the deficiency is the ignorance of Croesus, and his choice leads to immediate deterioration (the loss of his son). Croesus' reaction to the advice he receives from oracles (1.53–6) and dreams (1.107–8) involve the same functional event. Triplication is

[15] This is a well-recognized pattern: Dewald (1987) 20: on Bischoff (1932), Lattimore (1939).

a basic motif of the traditional tale, but also of the modern short story, where it has been related to the story shape, which has a beginning, middle, and end.[16]

This formal, artistic definition of short stories distinguishes them from Herodotus' other shorter narratives, such as his geographic and ethnographic excursuses, his descriptions of dedications, etc. (except where they themselves contain stories). But there has also been a desire to define short stories from their content. They are not unique in their focus on human achievement,[17] or their 'spirit',[18] or their sensational subject matter (lust, piracy, castration come to mind)—which are widespread throughout the rest of the narrative. However, they do exhibit stereotyped characters and patterns of action. Propp classified the patterns of stories in folklore according to their dominant actions as expressed through the functions of their *dramatis personae*.[19] Such classification is promising for Herodotus and comes close to defining content.[20] Patterns can be identified when they occur more than once, and their comparison often reveals their sometimes less than transparent meanings.[21] The patterns seem to come from the oral tradition which Herodotus constantly acknowledges, part of which seems to have been the traditional short story.[22] There are few written precedents extant,[23] but Homer uses patterns that sometimes constitute stories (the meeting with the king's daughter, etc.)[24] and his techniques could usefully be compared with those of Herodotus.

[16] Shaw (1983) 217.

[17] The proem's promise to deliver the 'achievements of mankind' applies to the whole narrative.

[18] Erbse (1981) 268–9 sees two themes (the restoration of order and the celebration of human talent) and two spirits: the tragic condition and the positive achievement of men. Both 'spirits' are found in the careers of eastern kings. Amasis is exceptionally free of the disaster that most others meet: 2.172–82, 3.10.

[19] Aly ((1921) 1969 was a landmark in the identification of traditional patterns in Herodotus. Propp ((1928) 1968) ch. 2 categorized them according to their dominant patterns, rejecting previous categorizations: 5–11.

[20] For work on patterns in Herodotus, see Stern (1991), who identifies 'scapegoat narratives' in stories of exiled tyrants, and Flory (1978a), who identifies Arion's leap with other brave gestures in Herodotus. Great care needs to be taken in establishing parallels that are tight enough to convince.

[21] Dewald (1987) 10 rightly sees archaic oral thought as 'largely inaccessible to our ways of thinking and feeling'.

[22] Aly ((1929) 1987) 63–9 defines the style of the Ionian 'Volkserzählung'. Dewald (1987) 14 refers to Trenkner (1958).

[23] Hecataeus *FGH* 1. fr. 1 may refer to the traditional short story when he calls the *logoi* of the Greeks 'many and laughable'.

[24] See Bowra (1972) 124–5.

It has been held that modern short stories are also adaptations of tradition rather than new creations, and that their compression lends itself particularly to formulaic treatment.[25] The oral background of Herodotus' *Histories* perhaps just makes this formulaic imperative of the form more pressing.

Herodotus' use of stereotyped elements creates recurrent plots in his stories. This is also true of the modern short story: 'The same few plots, I am sorry to say, have pursued me down through the years.'[26] The pattern, for example, in which a ruler expresses excessive and inconsistent kindness and cruelty toward a subject, shapes two short stories about Xerxes that frame his expedition against Greece. The first is the story of Pythius the Lydian. Xerxes rewarded Pythius handsomely for voluntarily supporting his large army on its march against Greece (7.27–9). But when Pythius asked for his eldest son to remain at home, Xerxes split him in two and put the halves on either side of the marching route (7.38–9). The story is also split, placed on either side of the intervening narrative, with the excessive kindness after Xerxes' crossing into Phrygia and excessive cruelty at Sardis before the march to the Hellespont and the crossing to Europe.

The same pattern is used in the story of how the captain of the ship carrying Xerxes back to Asia from Greece after his defeat at Salamis, recommended, in a threatening storm, that the Persians who crowded the deck be thrown overboard to ensure the king's safety (8.118). Xerxes asked for volunteers; they leaped to their death, and he landed safely. Whereupon he rewarded the captain generously for saving his life, and cut off his head for causing the death of so many Persians: characteristic behaviour, and a change of fortune, even if not for the main character! The story of Darius' reaction to a similar request to leave three sons out of his Scythian expedition shows only the unkind part of the pattern (4.84)—he left them all behind, dead, but the kind part is expressed in the father's expectation of friendly treatment. These patterns can be reduced further into motifs, but this chapter is considering actions that constitute a story rather than just part of one.

The formulaic should not be confused with the trite and meaningless, since patterns are likely to convey meaning of momentous human importance. Xerxes' pattern above conveys the whimsical

[25] Shaw (1983) 19.
[26] Shaw (1983) 19, quoting Borges.

nature of absolute power—no trite revelation. It seems no accident that the two stories form a frame at the beginning and end of Xerxes' expedition. The reader who notices this can enhance their individual meaning with interpretation of their placement.

The difficulty in the definition based entirely on patterns is that the main story develops the patterns of short stories into much longer ones.[27] Even a modern short story can be a condensed version of a longer one.[28] The distinguishing feature of the short story becomes even more clearly its avoidance of unfocussed complexity and its penchant for concentration and compression.

Three examples of stories of rise and fall, which is the commonest pattern in the *Histories*, demonstrate this. The pattern shows that the rapid accumulation of wealth leads directly or indirectly to disaster. Aminocles of Magnesia (7.190) acquires wealth from the shipwrecks around Artemision, but though rich, was 'unlucky' in the rest of his life: 'There was in this case too a certain unpleasant child-killing disaster that grieved him.' This very short account has the bare framework of the first phase of the rise and fall of Croesus, who loses his child after rejecting Solon's advice that the wealth he had acquired was no guarantee of permanent happiness. Its avoidance of detail and of complexity almost brings its status as a short story into question. It has nevertheless the required amassing of weight toward the ending. Polycrates' rise (3.39–43) and his fall (3.120–5) is a longer version of the pattern, separated out into its two phases to accentuate its polarity, with weight on the ending of both parts, but particularly the latter.[29] In the first part Polycrates' rise to wealth and fame is rapid (3.39). His story is then expanded by the insertion of wise advice from Amasis about the dangers inherent in his great 'luck', which he is unable to heed (3.40–3). In the second part, amidst further warnings, he meets his death (3.124–5). Croesus offers a full development of the pattern.[30] He experiences two phases of rise and fall. His first rise is no more rapid than

[27] See Immerwahr (1966) ch. 4 for the patterns of rise and fall behind the careers of the eastern kings. Herodotus also uses patterned campaign narratives not found in his short stories: Immerwahr (1966) ch. 6. Immerwahr also refers to general patterns in what he calls minor *logoi*: 73–5 'thought and action', 75–8 'rise and fall', and 244: 'the old *epic and folklore* story of the duel'.

[28] Shaw (1983) 21.

[29] See also Ch. 6, pp. 124–6 and 23, pp. 156–7 in this volume.

[30] See also Ch. 6, pp. 132–7 in this volume.

Polycrates' (1.26–8), but gains early complexity through the insertion of the story of the wise advice of Bias/Pittacus into the middle of it (1.27; a story in its own right). Solon's advice to Croesus, which follows, is also more elaborate than Amasis' to Polycrates (1.29–33). Croesus' inability to heed it leads to his first disaster in the loss of his son (1.34–46). He then plans a second phase of rise against Cyrus (1.46–85). This is much expanded by his courting and misinterpretation of the wise advice of the oracle, the acquisition of Greek allies and so on. The whole culminates in his final disaster, an elaborate final scene, a short story in its own right, in which he is made wise through suffering (1.86–91).

The distinction between the shorter and the longer version of the pattern lies in the presence or absence of additions, which can themselves take the form of short stories, such as that of the wise advisor. Herodotus sometimes tells stories in fewer than 300 words. He is nevertheless fond of complexity. He achieves it through the connected and unified double crisis in Arion's story, which connects the miracle and the inquiry into it (1.23–4), and again in the connection of crime and punishment in Hermotimus' and Artayctes' stories, below pp. 308–10, 313–14. He likes the incremental triple, which repeats the basic pattern for increasing impact, as in Croesus' triple rejection of Solon's advice or Xerxes' triple reversal, below pp. 310–13. He can divide a single pattern of rise and fall into its two phases, as in the story of Polycrates, or insert one pattern (the wise advisor) into another one (rise and fall). He produces even more complex stories out of a balanced interweaving of separate patterns. The story of the rise of Cyrus combines the revenge pattern as exemplified by Alexander (5.18–20), Hermotimus (8.104–7), and Artayctes (9.116, 120), with the pattern of the rise of the tyrant as exemplified by Peisistratus (1.59–64), Deioces (1.96–100), and Perdiccas (8.137–9), and is replete with insertions of various types which expand it out to over 3,000 words.[31] This reaches the lower limit of the modern story, which is often 2,000 to 10,000 words or longer.[32] The point at which such a narrative forfeits the distinctive qualities of the short story is a matter of artistic judgment. Cyrus' story does seem to possess that concentration and momentum toward closure that defines

[31] Long (1987) 126–75 for Cyrus; Gray (1997) for the rise of the tyrant.
[32] Shaw (1983) 7, 8, 11.

the short story. It is more difficult to define the difference between this narrative and the rise and fall of Croesus. It could only rest in the less organic contribution that some of the insertions in Croesus' story make to the development of the whole.

The reasons why Herodotus chooses to present material in the form of a shorter rather than a longer narrative concern the whole design of the work and cannot be done justice to here. It is true that while the main story addresses the expansion of eastern power, Greeks often appear in 'short stories' (Arion, Bias/Pittacus, Solon, Peisistratus of Athens and Sparta, Polycrates, Hermotimus), but that when the tide turns near the end of the *Histories*, Persians often take over this role (Artayctes, Xerxes and Masistes, Cyrus). Aminocles' story is also an insertion into an account mainly devoted to a storm bringing havoc to the Persian fleet. Yet this rule is not without exception.

Short stories are credited with clarity, simplicity, economy, and vividness.[33] This impression is a result of their narrative art, but also of their context. The advice of Bias/Pittacus looks vivid because it is set into an annalistic account of Croesus' rise devoid of such features (1.26–8), and even within the story of Solon's advice, his philosophical lecture on the computation of a man's life is dull by comparison with his clear, vivid, simple and economical story of Cleobis and Biton. Nor is the alleged main story devoid of these effects; thus the story of Zopyrus' capture of Babylon shows all these features (3.150–60). Arion's story possesses them, but not in much greater degree than the story of Alyattes' escape from illness (1.19: Alyattes' dilemma and proposed resolution; 1.20–1: he is deceived into failing his first attempt at a resolution, but 1.22: his second solution works). Neither has direct speech, both are clear, simple, and economical accounts of Alyattes' escape from disease, and Arion's from death. The deceptive sight of the Milesians drinking and eating from their large heap of stores is particularly vivid.

There is no uniform narrative mode that can define short stories. Bonheim (1982) distinguishes four narrative modes: description, report, speech, and comment. Herodotus writes short stories in the third person of narrative report except where speech intervenes, but this is characteristic of much of his narrative. The balance of report and speech is not uniform, even in short stories of common type, such

[33] Thomson (1935).

as those of Xerxes' excessive kindness and cruelty (7.27–9, 38–9 and 8.118, above p. 000), where his interview with Pythius uses direct speech almost exclusively, while his sea voyage is a report, with direct speech only to highlight the captain's advice and Xerxes' request. Similarly, though the wise advisor stories are usually in speech, some variations are reports (3.14, 119: below p. 000). Arion's story is even an exception to the apparent rule that stories mainly in narrative mark their crises in direct speech (the revenge of Hermotimus, the revenge on Artayctes, and many others). Those few descriptions that occur conform to the artistic requirements of the short story, which only admits material that contributes to interpreting the action (e.g., the wildernesses into which potential tyrants retreat: Cyrus 1.110.2, Perdiccas 8.138.2–3). There are frequent narratorial comments, particularly on the sources or the credibility of the stories (Arion 1.23, Xerxes 8.119; intrusions also make other points at 1.119.7, 8.137.2), but such comments also grace the main story.

In conclusion, short stories in Herodotus can be best defined by their presentation of stereotyped patterns of action of limited complexity which are concentrated and highly wrought, amass their weight toward their endings in a resolution of crisis, and can be grasped whole.

Pattern and Variation

The traditional tale has a twofold quality: 'its amazing multiformity, picturesqueness and color and on the other hand its no less striking uniformity, its repetition'.[34] Herodotus in fact varies his patterns in very sophisticated ways. I have already briefly described variations in the stories of kindness and cruelty, rise and fall, and the wise advisor. The pattern of the wise advisor merits a closer look, in order to appreciate its typical full range of variations.

The characters for a start are not always the plain wise man and ruler. Bias/Pittacus (1.27), Solon (1.29–33), dreams (1.34), Apollo of Delphi (1.47–56) and portents (1.78) variously advise Croesus. The characters can also change places. A deposed Croesus, made wise

[34] Propp ((1928) 1968) 21. Schwabl (1969), working on analogies, though not exclusively on short stories, concluded, 272: 'Geschichte führt bei Herodot immer wieder zum selben'; but variety is also essential.

through suffering the loss of his rule, advises Cyrus (1.88–9, 207) and, under constant threat of menaces, Cambyses (3.34–6). Demaratus, another deposed king made wise through suffering and exile, advises Xerxes, once in competition with Achaemenes (7.101–4, 209, 234–7). Even those still in possession of power prove wiser than their subjects in times of success (Pausanias' refusal of Lampon's advice: 9.78–9; Cyrus' refusal of Artembares': 9.122). There are no barriers of age or sex. The child Gorgo competes with ambassador Aristagoras in advising her father Cleomenes (5.49–51). Xerxes favours the advice of an adult woman Artemisia over the more calculating Mardonius even though he does not always act on it (8.68–9, 101–3). The ruler can take the initiative in seeking advice, *pro forma* or otherwise, or can receive it unasked; he can have the wit to see it or not, act on it or not, take offence at it or laugh at it. He can even test it first, as Croesus tests the oracles of Apollo and Amphiaraus (1.47–9). The advisor is usually indirect however (the oracles are an extreme case, but even ruling kings do not force their advice on their people: 9.122), and wary of a hostile response (1.88, 7.101; Artemisia is an exception).

The form of the advice can also be varied. Bias'/Pittacus' advice to Croesus (1.27) produces a brief dialogue, Amasis gives his advice to Polycrates (3.40–3) in a letter. Solon's advice (1.29–33) is expanded into the incremental triple that underlines Croesus' greater resistance to wisdom; the advice itself consists of two short stories (1.30.4–5, 31) and a long lecture (1.32–3). Demaratus, in another variation, advises Xerxes on three separate occasions, and each of these is formally varied. The first develops the incremental triple: three requests for advice from Xerxes and three responses from Demaratus, each one longer than the last, with final dismissal (7.101–4, including the motif in which the wise man warily asks whether he should speak to please or truly advise: 7.101). The second consists of two requests and two responses, the first shorter than the second, with final dismissal (7.209). The third also has two pairs of request and response, but includes the advice of Achaemenes, who opposes Demaratus, and is answered by Xerxes (7.234–7). By means of this kind of expansion the pattern even generates whole debates. Two wise advisors, representing the polarities of speaking to please and speaking the truth, are again in competition in the debate of 7.8–18. Xerxes deconstructs the pattern even while performing within it, when he calls his advisors to assent to his schemes rather than give true advice

(7.8d). Mardonius flatters unwisely while Artabanus tells the truth, with Xerxes having a series of reactions to what he hears. The speeches of 8.140–4 also involve three speakers, with the Spartans and Alexander offering opposing advice to the Athenians and the Athenians responding to each. These speeches also exhibit repeated motifs, such as the courteous but firm dismissal of advice (8.143.3, cf. 9.79.2).[35]

Sometimes the pattern is not easy to detect at first reading. In a variation of the wise advisor story, the Persian King Cambyses 'tries the soul' of the Egyptian King Psammetichus, who turns out to have gained wisdom through suffering (3.14). Cambyses parades in front of their defeated father first the enslaved princess, humiliated along with the other noble girls, then the doomed prince, a bridle on his mouth, a rope around his neck, in the midst of his fellows. The Egyptian shows no emotion. But then a third and accidental spectacle provokes his most severe distress; an older drinking-companion, unrelated to him, but fallen from prosperity, who is begging for what he can get from the soldiers. Cambyses fails to understand. The Egyptian explains that his own family's suffering surpasses tears, but not his old friend's. Cambyses recognizes that his enemy has wisdom in suffering. He even feels pity. Croesus, present at the testing of the Egyptian, cries also at the old friend's fall from fortune, so like his own. The three climactic tests of the Egyptian's soul (the daughter, the son, the friend) match Solon's triple advice to Croesus in speech, but are presented mainly in narrative form. Speeches mark only the crisis, which is the exchange of messengers, between the two kings, in which truth is revealed (3.14.9–10). The use of contrast is an additional feature, well suited to bring an extra dimension of meaning to the compressed form. Cambyses' courtiers reveal their own lack of wisdom when they weep for their own sons and daughters, paraded along with the royal children, but not for their old friend.

The story of the wife of Intaphernes (3.119) is a variation in a similar vein, again mainly presented as narrative report with the climax in speech. Having arrested her husband for disloyalty and being

[35] According to Lang (1984) 36, these patterns are of an oral rather than a rhetorical origin; for one exception, see Lang (1984) 138 ff. For arguments against the influence of formal tragedy: Long (1987) 179–92, Evans (1991) 4–5, and see Ch. 6 in this volume.

about to eliminate the rest of her kin as well, Darius offers her the choice of saving just one relative. She reveals unexpected wisdom by choosing her brother rather than her husband or sons, explaining to Darius that she cannot get another brother, but might get another husband and children.

These stories characterize the early parts of Cambyses' and Darius' reigns. The pattern often incorporates the motif of kings admiring the wisdom they receive; thenceforth, Cambyses keeps the defeated Egyptian king at his side (3.15.1), in the same way as Cyrus kept Croesus (1.88.1) and Cyrus kept the defeated Astyages when he showed political wisdom (1.130.3).

The final word belongs to an anonymous Persian, who deconstructs the pattern from the point of view of the wise man, as Xerxes deconstructed it from the ruler's point of view. He advises the Greek Thersander about the disaster coming to the Persians. His reason for informing the Greek rather than his own high command, who are alone in a position to do something about it, is, as he says, that disaster cannot be avoided, the wise advisor is never heeded, and he is under orders to follow; the worst pain is to know much and control nothing (9.16).

Some of these variations simply reflect the characters involved, but others may have greater significance, just as variation in Homer is sometimes the key to his meaning. This makes Herodotus' variations as worthy of investigation as the patterns themselves.

Organization and Function

The *Histories* as a whole are structured as a series of units marked by framing sentences or their equivalent, set in sequence, one giving rise to the next.[36] These are said to imitate the units of Herodotus' parenthetic *kai-* sentence structures.[37] His comment about the inabil-

[36] Immerwahr (1966) 7, 11–16 on general structure, 52–8 on framed units. These units (15), are of 'every conceivable length' and there is 'no hierarchy of major and minor'; (61): nothing should be labelled 'digression' since this implies lack of importance; it is impossible to say that the alleged digression is more or less important than other units; only 'From the purely formal point of view, we can make a distinction between shorter and larger units.' See also Ch. 11 in this volume.

[37] Immerwahr (1966) 47–51: *kai-* elements enhance the autonomy and separateness of each unit. Long (1987) 11–14: all ideas are presented as equally important, there is little subordination and a lot of conjunction.

ity to breed mules in Elis (4.30), which he calls an 'addition', actually describes his sequential habit.[38] The comment arises as an exception to his previous comment that mules generally tolerate temperate climes. This makes the structure of the work as a whole completely different from that of the short story, even though short stories are one of the many forms of unit found in the sequence. The short story is organic, like Aristotelian *poiēsis*, with a clear beginning, middle, and end, short enough to be focussed on the ending, and grasped in one view. In contrast, the work as a whole has an inorganic, archaic structure, a series of units of more or less equal weight, which cannot be grasped all at once. The ending is merely the last in the series. A form of ring composition could link it to the beginning, but it would be difficult to say that it carries the weight of the whole.

Short stories are nevertheless organized within the larger narrative according to this sequential habit. They usually have an obvious mechanical connection to the preceding narrative. They can involve a character of the main story (e.g., stories of advice). The connection is often personal in other cases as well.[39] Perdiccas' story (8.137–9), Euenius' story (9.92.2), and Artembares' story (9.122) arise out of the stories of their descendants: Alexander, Deiphonus, and Artayctes respectively. Arion's story (1.23–4) arises out of the mention of Periander, his patron, in the previous story of the siege of Alyattes (1.20, 23–4). Hermotimus is mentioned in the main story only in order to tell his own story (8.104–7).

The sequential impulse is strong. Even those stories out of chronological sequence are in structural sequence. Herodotus says that he is returning to an earlier point in his narrative when, after completing the campaign of Thermopylae, he tells how Demaratus first warned the Greeks of the invasion and how the wife of Leonidas interpreted his message (7.239). Yet it is linked to the previous unit through the immediately preceding reference to Demaratus as advisor of Xerxes (7.237) and to the dead Leonidas (7.238).

Stories structure the main story in various ways. They mark the completion of stages in the larger careers of the eastern rulers,

[38] Cobet (1971) 45–59 discusses 'additions', which Immerwahr (1966) 14 n. 34 would see merely as further *logoi* in sequence.

[39] Immerwahr (1966) 40 sees action and counter-action as the link between major units. Gould (1989) 42 points to the importance of personal connections in relating one unit to the next. See also the way in which Homer introduces characters: Richardson (1990) 36–50.

operating in a similar fashion to sections on ethnography and customs.[40] Hermotimus' story marks the end of the campaign of Salamis (8.104–7). Perdiccas' story marks the Persian offer of terms to the Athenians (8.137–9). Stories about diviners mark pauses before battles (8.33–7, 9.93–4). Stories of *aristeia* cluster after battles (9.71–83). Artembares' story marks the work's final pause (9.122). Short stories also frame larger units of narrative. The two stories of Xerxes' excessive kindness and cruelty link the beginning and end of his invasion (7.27–8, 38–9, 8.118). Demaratus' story (7.239) marks the end of the campaign of Thermopylae and refers back to its beginning. The three stories of Xerxes and Masistes, Artayctes and Protesilaus, and Artembares and Cyrus at the end of the *Histories* echo stories from the beginning (below pp. 310–15).

The thematic relation of short stories to their contexts is more controversial. Stories are often thematic 'digressions' in that they do not directly advance the chronological progress of the mainstream narrative, but the removal of the stories from Croesus' career would leave the merest skeleton of a narrative— no longer the full-fleshed and organic account of the human condition that the short stories make it. There are other ways besides in which short stories relate thematically to the main story. Those that arise directly from the subject matter often comment on it as a result of their placement. The advice of Bias/Pittacus (1.27) divides Croesus' conquest of the Greeks in Asia from those Greeks and other nations within the River Halys. It is placed here to explain Croesus' friendship with the Ionian islands, the one area of relations with Greeks in which he departs from the war-like conquest that surrounds it, and it thus confirms by exception his identity as 'the first who harmed the Greeks'. Solon's advice, which marks the completion of Croesus' rise to power and heralds the loss of his son, his first disaster in his unbroken happiness, is also of immediate as well as far-reaching thematic relevance because Solon focusses on sons as an ingredient of happiness (the sons and grandsons of Tellos, Cleobis and Biton, the sons of the priestess). Similarly, the twin *logoi* of Athens and Sparta (1.59–68) that herald Croesus' aggression against Cyrus and explain why Croesus chose to make alliance with Sparta as the most powerful of the Greeks, develop political thought about the constitutional sources of the mil-

[40] Immerwahr (1966) 61 f.

itary power he seeks.[41] Even Demaratus' story (7.239) has a thematic function. Herodotus says that his warning provoked the Spartan request for the oracle of 7.220. This predicted the death of Leonidas, which is the focus of the immediately preceding narrative (7.237–8).

Some stories that do not obviously contribute to the subject matter of the main story have seemed to drift free of their original connection, to develop their own unrelated themes.[42] Those stories that have an overt persuasive function within speeches are an interesting case.[43] According to the rules of rhetoric, Leotychides and Socles should shape their short stories of Glaucon (6.86) and Cypselus/Periander (5.92) to prove their point. And Leotychides does tell a story of failure to return a deposit held on trust that clearly instructs his audience to return the hostages that they also hold on trust. But the smile of the baby tyrant Cypselus has suggested that his story does not entirely prove the thesis that Socles is making about the blood-thirsty nature of tyranny.[44] That may seem unlikely when Solon and Bias so neatly tailor their material to their persuasive purpose. But the Homeric simile, as it is sometimes understood, might offer a parallel for this 'drift'.[45]

The other view is that the context alone can explain why Herodotus tells a *particular* story in a *particular* place, so that there should be a relation to the context that goes beyond the merely personal or accidental starting-point. After all, stories arising through personal connections do not arise for all individuals, nor, where they do, at their first appearance. Herodotus promises to tell the story of Alexander's lineage at his first appearance (5.22), but, in spite of further appearances, he delays the story until Alexander's appearance as intermediary between the Persians and Athenians (8.137–9). The reason for the delay could be that the story is more appropriate to that particular context.

Finally, one of the possible relations between short story and context is analogy.[46] This requires resemblances, e.g., of patterns, between

[41] Gray (1997).

[42] Gould (1989) 53: some stories have a 'power and scale and weight' out of all proportion with their alleged explanatory function; also 50–8. Cobet (1972) 140–55 sees the 'Novelle' as integrated into the whole in quite sophisticated ways.

[43] This use of the short story is Homeric: Gould (1989) 55–6.

[44] Contrast Gray (1996).

[45] Bowra (1972) 61–2.

[46] Schwabl (1969) 261, 265 on analogy.

the narratives. Short stories in which the patterns resemble those of the surrounding narrative may act as 'mirror texts', which indicate how to read the main text. They at least convey a generalizing significance, such as 'Prosperity *always* leads to ruin.' The difficulty in Herodotus is that resemblances are found throughout his short stories and his main story because of his widespread use of patterns. There is a question whether similarities between widely separated parts of the work convey any greater significance than the suggestion of the general rule in the particular case. The same applies to contrasts between such stories. But analogies or contrasts between short stories and their contexts are another matter, more likely to have specific local significance.

Meaning

The definition of short stories pursued in this chapter suggests a technique for the analysis of meaning: to identify the pattern through comparison with similar patterns, to consider the narrative shape, particularly anticipation and denouement to assess where the meaning lies, and through this to pursue the question of their relation to their contexts—and what follows is the experimental application of the technique, focussing on these matters.[47]

The story of Arion 1.23–4

The story has been described earlier. Arion's escape from danger is a story in its own right, but the inquiry into it makes it part of the larger story of double crisis. Periander is the focus of attention throughout since the miracle is reported to him and he conducts the inquiry into it.

The hero's escape from danger is a common pattern. Some heroes use ingenuity and courage. Hegesistratus, the seer of Plataea, escapes from danger by acquiring a knife and amputating his own foot while imprisoned in the Spartan stocks (9.37). Arion seems to use ingenuity to summon a god to help him escape when he asks permission to give a final performance. His dedication at Poseidon's sanctuary

[47] Vansina (1985) 144–6 has guidelines for the interpretation of patterns.

at Cape Taenarum (1.24.8) suggests that he at least thought that he was saved by divine power. The dolphin is then a divine agent. This makes his escape a divine salvation, which has its own special pattern within stories of escape from danger. More explicitly, Croesus shouts out an appeal to Apollo to save him from death and is rescued from his burning pyre through the agency of Apollo's rainstorm because he had pleased the god with his gifts (1.87). In a similar manner, Arion performs a song which pleases his god and is similarly rescued through the divine agency of the dolphin. His performance explains his rescue, as anticipation precedes denouement. Apollo of Delphi would be a suitable rescuing god for a poet under his protection, and much can be made of his connection with dolphins, but it is in Poseidon's sanctuary that Arion sets up his dedication, and his connection with dolphins is more obvious. The hymn or prayer, followed by the casting of an offering into the sea, is found in other appeals to the gods of the sea for protection from harm.[48]

Periander's inquiry also follows a pattern, which models Herodotean inquiry and may have a generalizing significance. Astyages also questions the herdsman, as Periander questions the crew, and the herdsman's presence at the court makes Harpagus tell the truth about Cyrus for fear of refutation, which is the effect that the appearance of Arion also has on the crew (1.117.1–2). Like Periander, Proteus questions Paris/Alexander about his possession of Helen and her treasure. Paris' prevarications are refuted by the witness of his runaway slaves (2.115), as the information given by the crew is refuted by Arion's appearance.

Arion's story arises from the mention of Periander in the previous mainstream story of Alyattes' siege of Miletus (1.20).[49] This link is strong because of the inquiring identity that Periander has in both stories. His investigation of Arion's story is parallel to his 'finding out' and relaying to Thrasybulus the information that allows him to deceive Alyattes into giving up the siege. The more important connection is through a wider analogy. Herodotus presents the story of the siege entirely in terms of Alyattes' divine salvation from disease

[48] Polycrates: 3.41; the various appeals to gods of the sea during the storms around Euboea: 7.191, 192.

[49] Long (1987) 52–3 and Munson (1986) survey the many different interpretations of this story and its context; most recently Erbse (1992) 153–6. Mine is a summary of what appears in fuller form in Gray (2001).

(1.19; 1.22.4) just as he presents Arion's story in terms of his divine salvation from death at sea.[50] The thematic significance (that men suffer from accident and disease, and pirates and a watery grave, and that the gods alone can give salvation from these ills) is of immense moral significance for the *Histories* as a whole, as serious as the advice of Solon about the human condition.

The stories herald the entry into history of Croesus (1.26.1)—and by analogy prefigure his divine salvation from a different range of the disasters that afflict men. Their placement here goes hand in hand with their thematic significance. Herodotus also postpones Alyattes' dedication in thanks for his escape from disease (1.25.2), which might have completed his story at 1.22.4, until after the completion of Arion's story, which ends with his dedication in thanks for his escape from death (1.24.8). The juxtaposition of their dedications reinforces the parallel of their divine salvation. Herodotus makes Alyattes' salvation the only real focus of his whole career, which spanned 57 years. He mentions other wars (1.16), but the siege of Miletus which he inherited from his father at the very beginning of his rule, is the sole focus because of the salvation that ensued. This, along with the development of the analogy with Arion, proves Herodotus' own artistic role in shaping his narrative.

The revenge of Hermotimus 8.103–7

The story heralds Xerxes' withdrawal from Greece. Hermotimus is mentioned as secondary escort to Xerxes' children only in order to tell his story. Herodotus indicates at beginning and end (8.103 and 107.1) that the primary escort was Artemisia.

The story follows the pattern of the revenge of Astyages (1.119), Alexander (5.19–21), and Artayctes (9.116, 120) and endorses the inevitability of punishment for injustice, but is uniquely the 'greatest revenge for injustice of those that we know of'.[51] The injustice that Hermotimus suffers and the revenge that he exacts take the particular form of castration, which destroys the reproductive capacity. Castrated as a child, Hermotimus becomes Xerxes' honoured and trusted court eunuch. Life is not all unfortunate! On business

[50] Schwabl (1969) 256–60 notes the parallel.

[51] Long (1987) 126–75, esp. 161 ff. on the patterns of Astyages' revenge. See also Ch. 9 in this volume.

one day in Atarneus, Hermotimus finds his castrator. Astyages-like, Alexander-like, with a strong variation on the irony that belongs to the motif, he invites his oppressor's family to receive their dues for making him such an honoured eunuch. When they arrive, he accuses his castrator of making him a 'nothing'. He says that the gods have delivered him into his hands and he forces his victim to cut his four sons, who then cut him. There are two potential crises (crime and punishment) but the first is not developed, and the emphasis, with attendant anticipation, falls heavily on the punishment—although the two *foci* do contrast the Persian view of eunuchs (trusty and honoured), and the eunuch's own Greek view (I am a nothing).[52]

Herodotus tells this story here because it offers an analogy that comments on the context.[53] Xerxes has burned Attica in revenge for their burning of Sardis (8.99.1), but is now in personal danger after his defeat at Salamis (8.99.2). Mardonius offers to continue the fight while Xerxes withdraws. Artemisia agrees, insisting that Xerxes and his household must survive and continue to threaten Greece (8.102.2–3). Panionius and Xerxes are of the same character and situation. They are both described as 'unholy', the castrator in the nature of his business (8.105, 106.3), the king for his desecration of Greek shrines (8.109.3). Xerxes is concerned for the survival of himself, his sons, and his household, which the Greeks might threaten. Panionius and his four sons and household are also threatened. But the analogy from this point is significantly imperfect and introduces a contrast. The gods have not delivered Xerxes and his household into the hands of the Greeks, as they delivered Panionius' household to Hermotimus for extermination (8.106.3). The Athenians want to pursue, but the Lacedaemonians refuse, on the grounds that Xerxes will continue to threaten them if he remains in Greece, but will eventually have to fight for his own land if he retreats. Themistocles, in pursuit of his own interests, tells the disappointed Athenians that their achievements have so far been the work of the gods and heroes, who refused to let one such impious man rule both Europe and Asia (8.108–9). The gods have allowed his defeat, but do not allow the

[52] His description as a 'gift' confirms that he is a 'thing': 8.105.2. See Dewald (1987) 23–5 on 'otherness'.

[53] Immerwahr (1966) 284–5 believes that the analogy is with Xerxes' revenge on Athens, but he notes Xerxes' fear for his sons. Cf. Erbse (1992) 94 f.: he enters into history to illustrate the Herodotean principle of balance.

elimination of his household and the end of his rule of Asia. The concept of limit is of course central to the thought of the *Histories*.

Xerxes/Artayctes/Artembares 9.107–22

The three stories mark pauses and conclude the various parts of the main story. Herodotus leaves the Greeks sailing for the Hellespont bridge after Mycale and follows the Persians retreating to Sardis. He highlights one incident. The king's brother Masistes is attacked when he castigates the commander of Mycale for ruining 'the king's house'. He is saved by a Greek (9.107), whom Xerxes rewards with the province of Cilicia. The mention of Xerxes' gratitude for the preservation of the brother who is so concerned for the royal household, and of the arrival of the army in Sardis, gives rise to the first story, set in Sardis, of Xerxes' own destruction of this same brother and his household (9.108–13). Herodotus then returns to the Greeks, who find the Hellespont bridge destroyed. Their subsequent siege of Sestus involves the governor of the region, Artayctes, who gives rise to the second story, which begins with his crime in robbing and desecrating the 'house' of Protesilaus (9.116). The story of his punishment ends the siege (9.120). Then the Greeks return to Greece and after the close of events for that year, Artayctes' story gives rise to the final story of his ancestor Artembares, which closes the *Histories*.

Analogies have been found to suggest thematic connections between these closing stories and the beginning of the *Histories*, and to create a structural frame around the entire work or substantial parts of it.[54]

Xerxes and Masistes

Herodotus calls this story 'the lust (*erōs*) of Xerxes and the death of Masistes' (9.113).[55] Xerxes was last seen fleeing the destruction of his household. Here he destroys his brother's household through his lust, which frames the story (9.108.1, 113.2). There is a directional marker confirming the movement (9.109.2: Masistes' daughter was doomed to bring ruin to her *and her whole house*). Xerxes' murder of the brother

[54] Moles (1996) 271–84 gives a good recent reading of all three stories. See also: Ayo (1984), Boedeker (1988), Herington (1991a), Erbse (1992), Dewald (1997) and Ch. 24 in this volume. But there is always more to say . . .

[55] See also Chs. 9, pp. 207–8 and 10, pp. 230–2 in this volume.

for whose preservation he gave reward in the preceding story makes it a pattern of reversal, like those that afflict Croesus and Adrastus and many others. This main reversal is the result of other reversals: Xerxes does not use violence (*bia*) against Masistes' wife because he respects Masistes, and she knows that she can resist Xerxes without fear of violence for the same reason (9.108.1), but due to a sequence of unexpected outcomes she receives the most monstrous violence from Xerxes' wife (9.112).

The patterned action that produces the reversal is the unwelcome obligation, caused by lust and creating a rift between two bonded men. It also shapes the story of Ariston's lust (*erōs*) for his friend's wife (6.62). Ariston has his friend swear an oath that they will give each other anything they want. He meets his friend's request, then demands his friend's wife, and he is bound to give her because he is under oath. Sometimes the *erōs* is latent. Democedes makes Queen Atossa swear an oath to give him in return for his medical treatment whatever he asks, but adds that this will not make her blush (3.133). His proviso suggests that *erōs* was the usual driving force in the pattern. He lusts himself for his home in Croton, and his rift is with King Darius.

Xerxes' story uses this pattern to create an incremental triple series of crises, where each is linked to the next through the unexpected outcomes of his gift-giving, which was part of the normal royal Persian protocol (9.107.3, 9.116.2), and the ultimate crisis is the break between the brothers. In the first two crises Xerxes is bound to give two women whatever they want. He has to give his mistress Artaynte the cloak because he has sworn on oath to give her whatever she wants as repayment for her services (9.109.2). This leads Amestris to detect his infidelity. He then has to give Masistes' wife to Amestris because of the requirement of custom (the equivalent of the pattern's more usual oath) to meet all requests on the royal feast-day (9.110.2–111.1). Amestris will mutilate her in revenge and her mutilation will lead Masistes to rebel. In the third and ultimate crisis, which varies the motif and puts the unwanted obligation back on his brother, Xerxes tries to force Masistes to accept the gift of another wife (his daughter) that will save his house, but fails, making him declare that he will teach Masistes 'how to accept gifts' and leading to the destruction of Masistes, his sons, and his army in civil war. Direct speech underlines this major crisis, the confrontation with his brother, and the anticipation has been long indeed. The earlier crises are marked by mixtures of direct and indirect speech.

The other pattern in the story is the contravention of *nomos* through lust, found also in the story of Candaules at the beginning of the work. Xerxes contravenes the laws of marriage, first through his infidelity, then in organizing his son's marriage to give him access to women, then in being obliged to request a further contravention in the form of Masistes' divorce from a virtuous wife and mother (9.108.1, 111.2–4). He struggles against the outcomes of these transgressions, as does Masistes, here taking on the role of Gyges in the earlier story, but the ruin is unavoidable.

The story generalizes the human condition, in which men achieve the opposite of what they intend, but this particular reversal is an appropriate final image of Xerxes at the end of the *Histories*, because it offers a domestic reversal to parallel his reversal in military affairs, about which the reader has been reminded in the introduction to the story, in the mention of the retreat from Salamis (9.107.3). His concern with the survival of his household during that earlier withdrawal prefigures his concern for his brother that also introduces this story. The other patterns may suggest other analogies. The analogy of the contravention of *nomos* through lust in Candaules' story could link the end of the work to its earlier parts. Yet the similarity of the pattern of the unwelcome obligation in Ariston's story has provoked no similar link. These analogies may show nothing more than the generalizing tendency at work. The story of Cyrus which subsequently endorses the virtue of the hard life of leadership could be commenting on Xerxes' decline from this standard, as seen perhaps in his slavish subjection to women. His mother already had 'entire power' to influence his original appointment as king in the struggle between two sets of royal brothers (7.2–3). But the decline is not apparent in Masistes. He is faithful to his wife, a good father, a successful soldier and leader whom the Bactrians and Sacians love (9.113.2). Xerxes recognizes his virtues (9.111.2). The continuing existence of this moral Persian reduces the power of the connection with the story of Cyrus. It is notable too that, though they stem from lust, Xerxes achieves his disastrous outcomes through the perfectly honourable royal custom of repaying service and bestowing favour, which Darius had operated to such good effect with Syloson and Zopyrus (3.140, 160).

Artayctes and Protesilaus

The story follows the pattern of revenge for contravention of *nomos*, told in two parts within the siege of Sestus: crime (9.116) and punishment (9.120).

The crime and the punishment are marked by passages of direct speech, preceding rapid and brief denouement. Artayctes deceives Xerxes into giving him the shrine of the hero Protesilaus, on the grounds that it is the mere house of a mere man who was put to death justly for campaigning against Asia. He argues that its seizure will deter others (cf. 7.5.2). He then takes the shrine, plunders its treasures, and uses it as a house, sowing the fields, having sex in it. He suffers military defeat and, in the main crisis, in chains he recognizes that the dead hero has power from beyond the grave to punish his transgression. He is unable to persuade the Greeks to accept restoration or recompense in spite of his speech of appeal. They crucify him and kill his son.

The story shows again that the gods deliver wrongdoers into the hands of their enemies in order to punish injustice. Other stories also show that some crimes do not allow restoration or compensation. Glaucon deceives his creditors, and is punished by the god whose oath he swore in spite of restoration (6.86). Xerxes desecrated Athenian shrines and then offered restoration and compensation. The Athenians preferred then, as Xanthippus and the Greeks prefer now, to avenge the heroes rather than agree with the desecrator (8.140–4).

The story has analogies throughout the work, but in the context of the final act of counter-hostilities against the Persians, this particular version suggests, even as the work finds its closure, that the conflict which has been its theme will not find closure, because the crimes committed can never be recompensed. There may be an analogy with the beginning of the work. The revenge that the Athenians and their allies take is for the desecration of the shrine of Protesilaus, who first campaigned against Asia in the earliest stage of the conflict. The early conflict was marked by the theft of women and refusals to restore or compensate for them (1.1–4). In the first crisis, Artayctes' story replaces the theft of women with the theft of the treasures of a shrine from a hero of that earlier period. And in the second crisis, though he now tries to restore and compensate for what he took, the Greeks refuse it, as they and their enemies did in the proem. The story might also show the further decline of Persian

morality, in contrast to the ideal that Cyrus is shortly to offer in his story (see below). It certainly resolves the theme of geographic transgression. Artayctes commits the crime as Xerxes marches on Athens and is crucified at the place of his crossing of the Hellespont. In what may also be an implicit analogy, the revenge taken in allied territory for allied gods foreshadows the Delian League's campaign of revenge against Persia.

Artembares and Cyrus

Herodotus closes his work with a wise advisor story, the last in a long sequence. Artembares gives advice to the Persians who pass it on to Cyrus, the architect of their first and perhaps greatest expansion. The story arises from the previous story of his descendant, Artayctes. Cyrus is an undefeated and victorious king who turns out to be a wise man, and Artembares and the Persians prove unwise. The parallel is the advice of the foolish Lampon of Aegina to the wise Spartan regent Pausanias (9.79). The unwise advisors in both stories praise the victorious king and suggest how this praise can be increased. Lampon says that mutilation of Mardonius will increase the already great glory of Pausanias; Artembares advises that the possession of a finer land would make the Persians even more admired. Just as Pausanias sees that this would extinguish even his present reputation, so Cyrus sees that would extinguish their present power.

The epilogue contradicts the earlier story in which Cyrus puts a choice in front of his Persians—to work the land all their lives or feast in luxury (1.126). He uses their preference for the soft life there to motivate them to rise against the Medes and set out on the path to empire. Perhaps he cheated them. Certainly, this episode serves a different purpose and points to the importance of context in shaping short stories in general.[56]

The pattern of the wise advisor has always been about choice. Here Cyrus offers his Persians a free choice that is no choice: to live in a fair and productive land and be subjected and enslaved by

[56] Herodotus has no qualms about consistency. His stories are strongly contextual. Thomson (1935) 199–207 notes that Herodotus' amalgamation of originally distinct stories produces inconsistencies of *character*. Edmunds (1997) 421 f. explains Homer's two different versions of Hephaestus' fall in terms of context.

others, or to live in a rough and unproductive land as warrior rulers of others. The Persians make the right choice. They accept that empires rise from rough lands because of need for the products of others, and conquer those who are too busy working the land to practice the lives of soldiers.[57] The story could contrast their original wise choice with the characters and behaviours shown by Xerxes and Artayctes in the other two stories. But the Persian kings who followed Cyrus never did really abandon this original choice.[58] The story may warn imperial Athenians,[59] but this political advice from the ruler who first developed the Eastern Empire, is an appropriate comment on its primary context, which is as an ending for a work that has written the history of this empire and confirmed through analogies the issues which are here addressed.[60]

The meanings and functions of short stories in Herodotus need careful analysis. They structure the work and address serious themes, both in their own right and in relation to other narratives, which they interpret. Their variations on patterns combine the universal with the particular in history.

Transmission and Truth

Once upon a time, short stories were discarded from the *Histories* as entertaining digressions devoid of historical truth.[61] But Arion's divine salvation is a truth of a different kind, and no more fabulous than

[57] Evans (1991) 38 f.: the original imperial impulse or *nomos* of Persia.

[58] The Persians do acquire wealth: 7.190. Feasting becomes part of their life: 9.82. Yet they do not apparently abandon their 'rough land': 1.71. The course of the Persian Wars shows that they do not abandon the warrior life or become slaves to others. Mardonius still prefers fighting to soft-living 'diplomacy': 9.41. Xerxes still honours good warriors: 7.238.

[59] For this approach to Herodotus, see Raaflaub (1987) and Moles (1996).

[60] For example, Solon asserts with Cyrus that the one land cannot produce all goods: 1.32.8. Demaratus asserts that poverty is likely to turn people toward military skill as the only means to ward off poverty and enslavement: 7.102.1. Subsequently, Thucydides' Corinthians emphasize the importance of toil in the imperial *ethos* of constant achievement of the Athenians: 1.70.8. Pericles emphasizes toil as the price that they must pay for the honour of rule: 2.63.1.

[61] Mure (1853) 457, 461 for the old view, stories as amusements for those readers who had no heart for the graver realities of political history and as relief of the main narrative. De Ste. Croix (1977) 135 (and Erbse (1992) 92) quote Gibbon, that Herodotus writes sometimes for children, sometimes for philosophers.

Croesus' salvation in the 'mainstream'. Once upon a time too, the 'historical' core within the short story was separated out from the 'folktale' elements. The separation is still tempting where stories are the earliest evidence for important events—such as the rise of Peisistratus to tyrannical power. But these are patterned in the same way as the more fabulous, in detail as well as in the round, and that makes the isolation of 'facts' impossible.[62] The same applies to patterns in the mainstream of the *Histories*.

Short stories have since been accepted in their entirety as traditional truths about the past of the cultures in which they were shaped.[63] Or the truths that Herodotus shaped, as Geschichtsschreiber rather than Geschichten-Erzähler.[64] Or the lies he told.[65] There is a need for more analysis of the relationship between the writer and his traditions.[66] It is characteristic of oral tradition that it develops existing stories to reflect contemporary concerns. 'Improvisation on an existing stock of images and forms is the hallmark of fictional narrative of all sorts.'[67] 'The old fables reassemble about some new point of attraction . . .'[68] Such adaptation is also characteristic of the written historical record and of short stories in Herodotus. The question of the extent of his adaptation remains open, though the study of oral traditions in other societies illuminates the task, as does the study of the modern short story.

The most attractive and positive assessment of the storytelling style of history as it now stands in Herodotus' text is that it is more thought-provoking than nineteenth century analysis: 'Herodotus' conception of historical thought as embodied in traditional stories "raises (rather than lowers) the level of reasoning [required of the reader]".'[69]

[62] Gray (1997) on the history behind the story of the rise of Peisistratus. In general for this problem, see Ch. 5, pp. 110–16 in this volume.

[63] Arion's story could be accepted for example as the genuine traditions of the Lesbians and Corinthians: 1.23. Thomson (1935) saw that audiences determined the content of stories.

[64] Erbse (1992) vii and *passim*. Schwabl (1969).

[65] Fehling (1971) 1989 believed that Herodotus falsified his traditions. Erbse (1991) and Fowler (1996) partially accept his thesis, Erbse as a device to distance Herodotus from 'the unbelievable', Fowler as the product of his mentality.

[66] Thomas (1989, 1996).

[67] Vansina (1985) 12.

[68] Thomson (1935) 167; also 20.

[69] Gould (1989) 41 paraphrases Redfield in *Arethusa* (1987) 252. *Ibid.*, ch. 6 on the business of the story-teller and reactions to it.

The continuing debate about the meaning of Herodotus' short stories proves that this view is correct. The technique of analysis here proposed, in terms of story patterns and narrative art, is a systematic way of revealing their meaning.

THE HISTORICAL METHOD

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

HERODOTUS AND THE PAST

Hans van Wees

Herodotus' interest in the past knew no limits. His investigations went back to the first known human, Min, who ruled Egypt some 11,500 years before the Persian War (2.142.1–3), and beyond him to the birth of the oldest gods another 5,500 years earlier (2.43.4, 145.2). They extended to the furthest boundaries of the known world, taking in the origins and achievements of all major nations along the way. Some readers see these accounts as mere digressions, entertaining but barely relevant, from the 'real' subject of the *Histories*, the Persian War. This badly underestimates the scope of Herodotus' ambitions, as set out in his preface:

> Herodotus of Halicarnassus hereby makes public the result of his investigations, so that the achievements of mankind may not be wiped out by time, and so that great and astounding deeds, some accomplished by Greeks, some by barbarians, may not be without fame—among other things, the reason why they waged war against one another.

His record of 'the achievements of mankind' (*ta genomena ex anthrōpōn*: 'the things brought about by human beings') included *all* of mankind and *all* of the past. The war between Greeks and barbarians was the end, not the whole, of this story. Since Herodotus artfully strung together histories and ethnographies of the world's nations along the thread provided by the story of the origins of this great war, his accounts of Egyptians, Scythians, and many other peoples did indeed take the form of digressions—but in substance they were an integral part of what the *Histories* were intended to be: a universal history of the human race.[1]

[1] So Lateiner (1989) 14–15, 217; Waters (1985) 23 (*contra* 47, 55); Fornara (1971a) 1, 32–5. More often, it is assumed that the *Histories* were essentially a history of the Persian empire, which 'swelled into a universal history' (Fornara (1983) 32), not by design, but as a side-effect of tracing the empire's expansion: so e.g., Myres (1953) 60–1; Immerwahr (1966) 17–45; Cobet (1971); Gould (1989) 1, 86; Luce

Herodotus' sheer ambition extended not only to the scope of his work but also to its intended audience. The wish expressed in the preface, that the events of the past should 'not be wiped out by time', implies that this work of history was compiled for posterity, not just for the entertainment or education of contemporary audiences. Herodotus' frequent use of the phrase 'until my time' (*es emê*), instead of simply 'until now', confirms that he was writing with an eye on later generations. He sought to create 'a possession for all time', just as Thucydides did, although presumably he would have rejected Thucydides' opinion that this mission was incompatible with storytelling and 'competition for an immediate audience'.[2]

The main purpose of the *Histories* was, still according to the preface, to record great achievements and bestow fame. Herodotus here made himself sound more like an epic poet glorifying the deeds of heroes than a historian reconstructing and analysing the past. Yet he advertised his knowledge of the past as derived from 'investigation' (*historiê*), aligning himself with contemporary intellectuals rather than traditional poets whose knowledge was supposedly divinely inspired. Herodotus is admittedly willing to tell stories regardless of their reliability, which may seem at odds with the insistence of historians from Thucydides onwards on finding out 'what really happened', but the contrast should not be overstated. Herodotus dealt mostly with oral traditions at least a generation old and extending into the realm of myth, so that he often felt unable to establish the facts and could do no better than repeat what he had been told, while keeping his critical distance—he concluded his first story with the words: 'I am not going to say whether these things happened in this way or in some other manner' (1.5). Whenever he felt that his evidence was reliable enough, however, Herodotus, no less than

(1997) 15–18; Romm (1998) 26. Although the *Histories* were *organized* around the history of the Persian empire, the preface and the sheer scale of the 'digressions' show that they were not intended *merely* as a history of the Persian empire. For the debate about the 'unity' of the *Histories*, see also Ch. 11, this volume; for a detailed analysis of Herodotus' preface, see Ch. 1, this volume.

[2] Thuc. 1.22.4. See also Ch. 4, pp. 91–4; Ch. 12, p. 283, this volume. Moles (1996) 278–9, notes the address to a future audience in Herodotus' remark about cities 'which *were* great in my day' (1.5.4); Fowler (1996) notes that there is no evidence for *es eme* in the work of Herodotus' contemporaries (73; cf. 76–7); also Bichler and Rollinger (2000) 15. Fornara (1971a) 60–1, 66, Gould (1989) 119–20, and Thomas (2000) 249–69, all stress the role of the immediate audience.

any of his successors, tried to find the 'truth' about the past.[3] There may have been a good deal of the poet and story-teller in him, but Herodotus was above all a historian insofar as his main concern was to make his record of the past as accurate as possible.[4]

Not everything that happened in the past was equally worth putting on record. Herodotus skipped whole stretches of the past deemed insufficiently 'great and astounding', including most of Cyrus' campaigns of conquest (1.177) and the first 11,000 years of Egyptian history (2.101.1). He made special note of such things as the world's greatest monument after the pyramids and ziggurats (Alyattes' tomb, 1.93.2), 'the mightiest battle between barbarians' (Persians and Massagetai, 1.214.1), and the longest-ever siege (of Ashdod, 29 years, 2.157). Among the more surprising entries were castration of a man and his four sons as 'the greatest of all known acts of vengeance' (8.105.1) and cutting off one's own foot as 'the greatest of all known deeds of bravery' (9.37.2). Herodotus pulled out all the stops for the culmination of his story: the Persian army of record-breaking proportions which marched against Greece.

> This was by far the greatest of all known military expeditions, so much so that by comparison the expeditions of Darius against the Scythians, or the Scythians in pursuit of the Cimmerians . . ., or the sons of Atreus against Troy, or the Mysians and Teucrians before the Trojan War . . . were *nothing*. All these expeditions and all the others that took place put together were still not equal to this single one. (7.20.2–21.1)

Very much in the same vein, Thucydides felt the need to argue at length that 'his' war in turn was superior to the Persian War and all that had gone before. By the next generation, 'great expenditures and great dangers' had become canonical criteria of historical importance, to the point that a historian might feel the need to apologize

[3] Dewald (1987) 151, 173: on 41 occasions Herodotus denied the truth of what he reported: 'much of his energy as a critic goes into emphasizing the serious limitations of his data'. See also Ch. 15, this volume, and Thomas (2000) 228–35. Intellectual context: Ch. 7, this volume.

[4] Herodotus displays a 'dizzy combination of narrative, storytelling and the use of deductive proof': Thomas (2000) 175; also *ibid.*, 168–75, 190–200, 217–18, 267–71; Lateiner (1989); Hunter (1982); see also Ch. 1, pp. 13–19, this volume. As is often pointed out, there is a great difference between ancient and modern standards of proof, plausibility, and acceptable invention, but this does not affect the essential point that Herodotus strove for accuracy by the standards of his time.

for including material that did not quite meet these standards (Xenophon, *Hellenica* 5.1.4).[5]

The *Histories*, however, were much more than a list of world records. Herodotus' generous definition of his subject as 'the achievements of mankind' allowed him to range exceptionally widely in past and present. Three historical topics stand out as of special significance to him: the origins of communities and customs, the rise and fall of powers, and the causes of wars.

Deep roots: the question of origins

An interest in origins is perhaps the most obvious motive for investigating the distant past, and Greeks had been reciting genealogies and telling migration stories long before Herodotus.[6] It is not surprising, then, that the *Histories* often elaborated on the descent or geographical origins of individuals and nations. The very first bit of historical information offered by Herodotus was, as it happens, that the Phoenicians were migrants 'from the so-called Red Sea' (1.1.1). His concerns, however, went beyond compiling folk histories of origins. Much of his material seems calculated to challenge the sort of ideas about the Greeks' common roots and identity expressed in the *Histories* by an Athenian who defines 'Greekness' as 'having the same blood and the same language and common shrines and sacrifices, as well as similar customs'.[7]

Taking 'similar customs' first, the audience was soon disabused of any notion that these were originally or exclusively Greek. Trading in the market-place was thought of as a typical Greek activity (1.153.1–2), but it was the Lydians who were 'the first of all people we know to strike and use gold and silver coins, and also the first to become retail traders' (1.94.1). The Greeks were particularly proud

[5] Cf. Xenophon, *Hellenica* 2.3.56, 2.4.27. Thucydides' (implicit) use of these criteria: 1.1–21.

[6] See esp. Fornara (1983) 4–23; Hornblower (1994) 9–15.

[7] 8.144.2; as Harrison (2000b) 212–15 points out, the speaker here claims only distinctive common religious *rites* for the Greeks, but other passages make clear that there are supposed to be distinctive Greek *gods* also (4.108.2; 5.49.3, 92.η5; 9.90.2). Greek 'ethnic identity': Hall (1997). Herodotus' questioning attitude: Thomas (2000) 102–34; Hunter (1982) 74–92.

of their characteristic armour, weapons, and tactics, yet not only was the invention of shields and helmets attributed to the Egyptians (4.180.4), but some of the things that made Greek military equipment distinctive—helmet crests, shield emblems and shield handles—were credited to the Carians (1.171.4). The first to divide armies into heavy infantry, light infantry, and cavalry in the classical Greek manner was a king of the Medes (1.103.1). All but one of the games played by the Greeks were borrowed from Lydia (1.94.2–3), while the four-horse chariot, used in the most prestigious of Greek sporting competitions, came from Libya (4.189.3). Herodotus argued at length that writing was introduced into Greece by Phoenician immigrants, along with 'many forms of learning' (5.58–61); in this light, his earlier remark that one of the Seven Sages, Thales, was 'a Phoenician by distant descent' (1.170.3) emerges as more significant than it may seem. He noted that astrology and geometry and the art of singing all originated in Egypt (2.79, 82.1, 109.3). The Greek system of measuring time was devised by Egyptians (2.4.1) and Babylonians (2.109.3).

Customs peculiar to the major Greek cities were revealed as equally unoriginal. The 'Ionian' style of dress adopted by Athenian women was in fact Carian (5.88.1), while the dress and aegis worn by Athens' patron goddess were Libyan (4.189.1–2). The Athenians might pride themselves on being 'the first of the Greeks' to represent the god Hermes with erect phallus, but ultimately they were only copying the Pelasgians (2.51.1). More significantly, the Persians seriously considered the institution of democracy, more than a decade before Cleisthenes introduced it in Athens (3.80–2; cf. 6.43.3). Not even Sparta's customs were unique: some were shared with Persians (6.59), others with Egyptians (6.60), and the spectacular royal funeral rites had parallels among most 'barbarians in Asia' (6.58.2).

Herodotus demolished any suggestion that the 'common shrines and sacrifices' of the Greeks were native. He argued that the identities of all Greek gods were learnt from barbarians, primarily from the Egyptians (2.50.1), and that it was at most 400 years ago that the Greeks had acquired detailed knowledge of the pantheon—like 'yesterday or the day before' (2.53.1). Altars, temples, statues, images carved in stone (2.4.2), religious festivals and processions (2.58), the taboo on sex in sanctuaries (2.64.1), and the doctrine of reincarnation (2.123.2–3) were all invented by the Egyptians. Even the cries

uttered at sacrifices were not spontaneous but a custom learnt abroad, from the Libyans (4.189.3).[8] As for the Greek language, it had developed from a 'barbarian tongue' spoken by the Greeks' ancestors (1.57) and even the latter was not the earliest known language. This, research had shown, was Phrygian (2.2).

Most remarkable perhaps was Herodotus' attitude towards 'having the same blood'. He seized several opportunities to demonstrate that prominent Greek families and entire 'ethnic' groups were of non-Greek descent. All of Greece, he noted repeatedly, was originally inhabited by a barbarian people called the Pelasgians, and those Greek nations who prided themselves on always having lived in the same place—the Athenians and Arcadians, above all—were thus direct descendants of these barbarians.[9] The Pelasgian inhabitants of Athens were originally called Cranaans, and only later became 'Athenians', then finally 'Ionians' (8.44.2). It was not until this last stage that they 'split off' from the Pelasgians, adopted a new identity and language, and first became Greeks (1.57.3). Even then some Pelasgians within Athenian territory continued to maintain their original ethnic identity, until eventually they were forced to emigrate.[10] No less striking was Herodotus' take on the ethnic origins of Athens' most celebrated political heroes, the tyrant-slayers Harmodius and Aristogeiton, who belonged to a clan called the Gephyraeans. He went so far as to reject out of hand the clan's own story that they were of Eretrian origin: 'as I have found by inquiry, they were Phoenicians' (5.57.1).

There was no such uncertainty about the Spartans and the other Dorians who had been 'a Greek people' from the start (1.56.2), and Herodotus traced the ancestry of the Spartan kings back to Heracles, the greatest Greek hero, as was conventional (7.204, 208.1, 8.131.2). Yet in an extraordinary passage he announced that, going further back in time, 'the kings of the Dorians' had been Greeks only 'up to Perseus, son of Danae', ruler of Argos:

> I said 'up to Perseus', and did not take it further back for the following reason: no name is known for a mortal father for Perseus . . .

[8] See further Harrison (2000b) 208–22, 251–64; see also Chs. 8 and 18, this volume.

[9] 1.56–8, 2.51–2, 2.171, 6.136–8, 8.44; cf. 8.73. Hall (1997) 51, 72; Thomas (2000) 117–22.

[10] 1.57, 2.51, 6.137–8; cf. 4.145.

> Thus I used the right phrase and correctly said 'up to Perseus'. If one lists the paternal ancestors of Danae, daughter of Acrisius, one will find that the leaders of the Dorians are *Egyptians by direct descent*. . . . Why and how, as Egyptians, they acquired the kingships of the Dorians, I will leave out.[11]

To complicate matters, he also cited the Persian belief that Perseus was originally an Assyrian, not an Egyptian, and that his son was the ancestor of the Persian people (6.54, 7.150.2).

If such comments tended to raise questions about the significance of Greek 'blood', Herodotus was openly scathing about the 'very foolish' claims of certain cities in Asia Minor to be of 'nobler' and purer Ionian descent than others. A large proportion of the original settlers, he said, in fact consisted of other Greek and non-Greek groups, and even the Ionians among them had taken barbarian wives and barbarian kings (1.146–7). A little later, he mocked the habit of the Greeks of tracing their ancestry back to a god or hero over as few as sixteen generations, when in Egypt there had been 345 human generations without any divine or heroic connection (2.143). The audience was surely meant to infer that the Greeks' ultimate origins were not only more mixed but lay much further back than they had realized.

Contemporary audiences were almost certainly more open towards such ideas than some of Herodotus' later critics proved to be: Plutarch was almost apoplectic when he repeated some of the above points in his treatise *On The Malice of Herodotus* (esp. 13–15, 23). But even broad-minded intellectuals of the late fifth century apparently refused to believe that the Persians had contemplated a democratic government before the Athenians did (3.80.1; 6.43.3), and we should not underestimate just how radical some of Herodotus' ideas were.[12]

The *Histories* were certainly not always so critical. Herodotus often enough appears to have simply repeated the genealogies, founding legends, and stories of origins that were presented to him, without making a point of challenging their validity. But the cumulative effect of the many passages which attribute non-Greek origins to Greek

[11] 6.53, 55. This is a particularly striking claim because Herodotus elsewhere accepts the more conventional idea that these Egyptian rulers imposed themselves on pre-Dorian, Pelasgian populations: 2.171. (Lateiner (1989) 100 suggests that Herodotus is mocking the genealogy.)

[12] See Chs. 1 and 15, this volume, for Herodotus' self-consciously polemic pose.

communities, customs and heroes, combined with an occasional outspoken polemic, leaves little doubt that one of Herodotus' aims in investigating origins was to prove a point which he made in his opening discussion of the Greeks as a nation: that they were once 'weak' and grew in numbers and power only because their ranks were swelled by 'Pelasgians and numerous other barbarian peoples' (1.58).

Lost empires: the rise and fall of powers

The changeability of fortune was a favourite topic of Greek moral discourse, and it has a prominent place in the *Histories*, most famously in their lengthy re-telling of the popular stories of how King Croesus of Lydia and the tyrant Polycrates of Samos fell from grace. Herodotus extended this interest to the changing fortunes of entire political communities, which he felt was an important enough theme in his work to be highlighted at the outset:

> I shall move on with my story, touching equally upon small and great cities of mankind. For those which were great in the old days have in most cases become small, and those which were great in my day had been small in the past. (1.5.3–4)

The *Histories* happily drew moral lessons on the subject, sometimes blatantly, as in the stories already cited, and sometimes more subtly.[13] The observation that the 'notable' Egyptian city Anthylla had ever since the Persian conquest been reduced to paying for 'the footwear of the wife of whoever rules Egypt at the time' (2.98.1) was immediately followed by an account of the country's long and glorious history; the poignant juxtaposition was no doubt deliberate. Herodotus, however, went beyond mere moralizing and made an effort to establish the precise extent and duration of the 'leadership' (*arkhê* or *hêgemonia*) of the great powers of the past.[14]

[13] See Ch. 9, pp. 217–24; Ch. 13, pp. 296–8; Ch. 23, pp. 524–8 (Polycrates); and Ch. 24, pp. 553–9 (Persian empire), this volume.

[14] Evans (1991) 144: Herodotus was 'the first historian to articulate the idea of the succession of empires'. The modern distinction between *arkhē* as 'empire' and *hēgemonia* as 'hegemony' is not made by Herodotus, who uses the terms as synonyms: e.g., Persian 'rule' is *hēgemonia* in 3.65.6, *arkhē* in 3.73.1–2. See also below, n. 44.

Table: Herodotus' chronology of the rise and fall of empires

Egypt	Lower Asia (west of R. Halys)	Upper Asia (east of R. Halys)	Greece	Modern dates
330 generations (2.100), 11,000 years (cf. 2.142), from Min to Moeris, 'less than 900 years' ago (2.13)			Births of Dionysus and Heracles, 1,000 and 900 years, respectively, before Herodotus (2.145)	until *c.* 1300 BC
Sesostris (2.103–10): conquest of Ethiopia, Asia, and Scythia				
Pheros (2.111)				
Proteus (2.112)	***Heraclid dynasty*** *of 22 generations, 505 yrs. (1.7)*	***Assyrian rule*** *for 520 years (1.95)*	Trojan war: '800 years before my time' (2.145)	from *c.* 1225 BC
Rhampsinitus (2.121) Cheops (50 yrs., 2.127) Chephren (56 yrs, 2.127)		Rulers include: Sardanapallus (2.150)		
Mycerinus (2.129) Asychis (2.136) Anysis (2.137) Sabacos (50 yrs, 2.137) Sethos (2.141)		Sanacheribus (2.141)	Hesiod & Homer 'no more than 400 years' before Herodotus (2.53)	*c.* 825 BC
[Saite] dynasty *[6 generations, 145 years]*	***Mermnad dynasty*** *[5 generations, 170 years]*	***Median rule*** *for 4 generations, 128 years* (1.130)*		from *c.* 700 BC
Psammetichus, 54 (2.157)	Gyges, 38 (1.15)	Deioces, 53 (1.102)	Archilochus (1.12)	
Necos, 16 (2.159)	Ardys, 49 (1.15)	Phraortes, 22 (1.102)		
Psammis, 6 (2.161)	Sadyattes, 12 (1.16)	Cyaxares, 40 (1.106)	Cypselus, 30 years (5.92)	
Apries, 25 (2.161)	Alyattes, 57 (1.25)	Astyages, 35 (1.130)	Thrasybulus of Miletus, Periander of Corinth (1.20)	
Amasis, 44 years (3.10), and Psammenitus, 6 months (3.14)	Croesus, 14 (1.86)	***Persian rule*** Cyrus, 29 (1.126-130, 214)	Anaxandrides and Ariston, kings of Sparta (1.67)	*c.* 560 BC
	Persian rule over all Asia *Conquest of Lydia by Cyrus (1.130)* Cambyses, 7 yrs., 5 months (3.66)		Pisistratid dynasty, Athens, 36 years (1.59–64; 5.65)	from 546 BC
Persian rule over all Asia and Egypt *Conquest of Egypt by Cambyses* (3.10–16)			Polycrates of Samos (3.44)	from 525 BC
Smerdis, 7 months (3.67)				522
Darius, 36 years (7.4)				522–486
Xerxes (7.4)			Persian invasion of Attica, 'in the archonship of Calliades' (8.51)	from 486 480 BC

* Not including the interruption by 'Scythian rule' for 28 years (1.104, 106, 130; 4.1; the figures do not add up).

His special interest in 'leadership' is immediately obvious from his treatment of the story of Croesus. Although there had been much earlier contact and conflict between Greeks and barbarians, the *Histories* started with the reign of Croesus, because he had been the first barbarian to 'subject' Greeks and impose 'tribute' (*phoros*; 1.6.2, 27.1), that is, he was the first to incorporate Greeks into what we would call an 'empire'.[15] Herodotus defined the precise extent of Croesus' conquests with a list of ten barbarian and three Greek subject populations (1.28) and stories about the natural boundaries of his empire in the west (1.27) and east (1.28, 72.2–3). He was uniquely specific about the age at which Croesus came to power, 35, and noted that his rule lasted 14 years, ending with the fall of Sardis after a siege of 14 days (1.26.1, 84.1, 86.1). Indeed, Herodotus went back to the beginning of Croesus' dynasty, listing the exact lengths of the reigns of his predecessors, and further back still, to the previous dynasty which 'ruled for 22 generations, 505 years' (1.7.4; see Table, pp. 329). Some of this information helped to bring home the moral of Croesus' story as Herodotus told it, but its apparent precision is remarkable. The exact figures were hardly a narrative necessity, and their profusion here is surprising given their rarity in Herodotus' accounts of Greek history.[16]

We find the same pattern in subsequent treatments of the 'rule' of the Medes, Scythians, Assyrians, Egyptians, and Persians: the territorial extent, political nature, and chronological span of each were set out in notable detail. The growth of the power of the Medes was traced step-by-step, from the unification of the six Median peoples (all listed, 1.101), via their first foreign conquest (of the Persians, 102.1), to their subjection of all Asia east of the River Halys (103), including Assyria 'except the Babylonian part' (106.2). Herodotus briefly explained the curious ranked structure of Median rule, which placed the Medes themselves in direct control of their neighbours, but allowed these neighbours to control their own neighbours in

[15] As Stadter (1992) 795–8 points out, the Athenian 'empire' and its tribute were taken as the model of 'leadership'; more on the implications for Herodotus' message below, p. 343, n. 47.

[16] The contrast between the precision of chronological indications for barbarian empires and their vagueness for Greek history may help explain why some scholars feel that Herodotus was keenly interested in chronology (so Fowler (1996) 75–6; Strasburger (1956)) while others think that his interest in the subject was limited (see Chs. 17 and 22, pp. 500–4, this volume).

turn, and so on, to the borders of the empire (1.134.3). He gave the length of each king's reign, and totted up the figures to show that Median rule in Upper Asia lasted 128 years (1.130.1).[17]

A Scythian invasion of Upper Asia had interrupted Median dominance: 'the Scythians ruled Asia for 28 years, and they created chaos with their aggression and arrogance' (1.106.1). Apart from reiterating the length of their rule (4.1.2; cf. 1.130.1), Herodotus also recorded just how far their power reached: 'they governed almost all of Upper Asia' (7.20.2) and came as far as Ascalon in Palestine (1.105). By contrast, he provided no such detail for the contemporary, ostensibly similar Cimmerian invasion of Lower Asia, although this had had a much greater impact on many Greek cities and had become near-proverbial in early Greek poetry. The reason for this different treatment was evidently that the Scythians raised 'tribute' wherever they went (1.106.1), whereas the Cimmerians merely raided (1.6.3). The Scythian presence, for all the chaos it produced, thus qualified as a period of leadership, whereas the Cimmerian presence did not. The fact that Herodotus paid more attention to a short-lived and probably unhistorical[18] empire in remote Upper Asia than to the notorious destruction of Greek cities close to home is testimony to his special interest in the rise and fall of great powers.

It may have been the same interest that encouraged him to plan a detailed account of Assyrian history, including a list of the kings of Babylon (1.184) and the final sack of the capital Nineveh (1.106.2). Herodotus' remark that 'the Assyrians had ruled Upper Asia for 520 years' before the Medes took over (1.95.2) certainly fits the pattern, but since no further account actually appears in the *Histories*, we can only speculate about what might have been.

The earliest and greatest power of all was the Egyptian empire created by the conquests of Sesostris. This took shape about two generations before Assyria and Lydia emerged as major powers (see Table, p. 329) and extended not only to all of Asia, by land and by sea as far as ships could sail, but also to the Scythians and Thracians in Europe, and the Ethiopians in Africa (2.102–10). In this case we are not told how the empire was governed, or how long it lasted—the narrative gives the impression that it did not

[17] The figures do not add up correctly; attempts to make them tally (see How and Wells, Appendix III.6) are unconvincing.

[18] See Ch. 19, p. 437, n. 4, this volume.

outlive Sesostris himself—but Herodotus went to exceptional lengths to prove that it did exist. He cited two kinds of inscription as proof of the extent of Sesostris' conquests[19] and resorted to ethnographic evidence to demonstrate that some of Sesostris' soldiers had settled as far away as the Black Sea: the natives here, he claimed, shared the Egyptians' dark skin and 'woolly' hair, their weaving technique and their practice of circumcision (2.103.2–105). The important point for Herodotus was that this ancient empire had included everything that was later to become part of the Persian empire—and more, because the Persians never conquered the Scythians (2.110.2–3).[20]

In subsequent generations, the power of Egypt declined so far that the country was conquered by Ethiopians (2.137–9) and almost by Assyrians as well (2.141). Its fortunes were revived by Psammetichus, whose campaigns included the longest-ever siege (2.157). His successor Necos built a fleet of triremes (2.159.1), Psammis attacked Ethiopia (2.161.1), Apries campaigned as far north as Phoenicia, and had an army of 30,000 mercenaries (2.161.2–163.1), and finally there was a peak of prosperity under Amasis (2.177.1), who was said to have been 'the first human being to capture Cyprus and subject it to the payment of tribute' (2.182.2). For the period of Egypt's rise to power, Herodotus recorded the length of each king's reign, whereas for earlier rulers he had given hardly any dates at all.[21]

The most detailed investigation of any power was of course devoted to the Persian Empire. The stages of its expansion were clearly marked: Cyrus' rebellion against the Medes made the Persians rulers of Upper Asia, his victory over Croesus put Lower Asia in their hands (1.130), and his further campaigns subjected 'every nation' in

[19] 2.102.4–103.1, 106; actually Ramesside stelae and Hittite reliefs: West (1985) 298–302.

[20] As the Persian King Darius himself is said to have acknowledged (*ibid.*); compare the later emphasis on the lack of Persian authority beyond the Colchians and the Caucasus (3.97.4), i.e., beyond the northern boundary of Asia and Europe (4.45.2). For a probable (remote) historical model for Sesostris, see Ch. 18, pp. 000–00, this volume. This investigation, and the rest of the long account of Egyptian history, confirms that Book Two was not an overgrown digression, but a major part of the universal history in its own right (cf. Hunter (1982), esp. 92).

[21] The exceptions are listed in the Table, p. 329, and are easily explained: Sabacos' 50 years in effect mark another mini-empire, when the Ethiopians ruled Egypt (2.137), and were predicted by an oracle; Cheops' 50 and Chephren's 56 years were required to explain why their pious successor came to a bad end: an oracle had predicted 150 years of misery for Egypt and after the combined 106 years of Cheops and Chephren time simply was not yet up (2.127, 129).

Upper Asia 'without missing a single one' (1.177, 190.2), making Cyrus, among other things, the first man ever to capture Babylon (191.6). His son Cambyses added Egypt, Libya, Phoenicia, and Cyprus (3.13.3, 19.3), and in doing so transformed the Persians from a strictly land-based power (1.143.1) into a naval power as well. The Persians proclaimed Cambyses a 'better' man than his father, because he had maintained control over all earlier conquests and 'had won in addition Egypt *and the sea*' (3.34.4). In the next generation, the island of Samos was Darius' very first conquest (3.139.1), followed by the Indians (4.44.3) and Thracians (5.1–2), the two most populous nations in the world (3.94.2, 5.3.1). After that, only the Greeks stood between the Persians and total control over the rest of Europe (7.50.4, 53.2) and thus world domination (7.8γ2). Herodotus carefully signposted Megara as the 'furthest point in Europe towards the setting sun' reached by a Persian force before their ambitions were finally thwarted (9.14).[22]

The tribute raised by the Persian empire was a matter of so much interest to Herodotus that he compiled, or reproduced,[23] a list of the precise annual amounts contributed by each of the twenty provinces of the empire, adding up to the equivalent of 14,560 Euboean talents of silver, plus 360 white horses, 500 eunuchs, 120,000 measures of grain (3.89–95). On top of this, the provinces were obliged to provide supplies whenever an army was raised (1.192.1), the fish tax from Lake Moeris brought in an average 40 minae of silver a day (2.149.5) and in one unfortunate region the locals were made to pay 'a lot of money in addition to the tribute' for access to vital water supplies (3.117). At the extreme ends of the empire, some nations produced 'gifts' rather than tribute, and their ebony logs, elephant tusks, and talents of frankincense were dutifully added to the list (3.97). Almost as remarkable as the detailed cataloguing of these sums are the unusually elaborate calculations by which they were converted into standard measures of silver (3.89.2, 95). Herodotus could not have done much more to impress upon his audience the vast scale of resources raised by the Persian empire 'until my day'

[22] Compare an earlier marking of the furthest point west reached by a Persian army in North Africa: 'the furthest part of Libya reached by this Persian army was Euesperides' (4.204). For the rise of the Persian empire, see also Ch. 24, pp. 553–9, this volume.

[23] For a sceptical view of the origins of this information, see Armayor (1978a).

(3.97.3; 6.42.2), but for good measure he threw in an anecdote about Cambyses angrily picking up and scattering to his troops Cyrene's gift of 50,000 drachmas, a hefty sum by Greek standards, 'because it was so little, I believe' (3.13.4).[24]

The lifespan of the empire was measured, as ever, by giving the length of each king's reign. The apex of its power—when it assembled the greatest army in world history (7.20–1), shown by another lengthy series of calculations to have consisted of 5,283,220 men, accompanied by cooks and concubines, eunuchs, beasts of burden and dogs (7.184–7)—was marked by the only absolute date recorded in the *Histories* ('the archonship of Calliades', 480 BC, 8.51.1).[25]

It almost goes without saying that, for all its apparent precision, much of Herodotus' information about the great powers of the past is unreliable, and indeed demonstrably false. His history of Egypt before the Saite dynasty, for example, bears little relation to known reigns and events, and is not even internally plausible since it has only eight generations of kings to cover a span of more than 500 years (see Table, p. 329).[26] More remarkable than the mistakes, however, are Herodotus' willingness and ability to reconstruct and synchronize—so far as we know from scratch—any sort of world history at all, let alone one which was roughly accurate for the last 300 years or so, and dared to reach back more than eight centuries.[27] Measuring the dimensions of past empires in this way must have required an intense research effort.

Herodotus' explanation of the rise and fall of the great powers, although presented in an unsystematic manner, was quite comprehensive. Beyond the simple observation that it took divine support[28] and large numbers of brave fighters to win power,[29] he remarked

[24] Herodotus is inconsistent in claiming that before Darius subjects offered only 'gifts', no 'tribute' (3.89.3), yet elsewhere mentioning tribute paid to Cambyses (3.13.3, 67.3; 4.165.2).

[25] See for this, and many other points of chronology, Ch. 17, this volume.

[26] See Chs. 18 (Egypt), 19 (Scythian 'empire'), 21 (Babylon and Assyria), this volume. Medes: Sancisi-Weerdenburg (1988b, 1994). Persians: Balcer (1987).

[27] Herodotus' contemporary Hellanicus may also have had 'universal' aspirations: his chronicle of the *Priestesses of Hera at Argos* included events in Macedon, Phrygia, and Italy (*FGrH* 4 F 74–84). Against the common view that Herodotus drew a clear line between historical time and mythical time: Hunter (1982) 86–7; and Chs. 17, 22, pp. 497–8, this volume.

[28] For explanations at the supernatural level, see Chs. 8 and 9, pp. 217–24, this volume.

[29] Bravery of Lydians: 1.79.3; of Persians: 9.62.3. Large manpower reserves: 4.1.1.

on the importance of unity among the conquerors. If the numerous and warlike Thracians 'were ruled by a single man or were able to unite, they would be invincible and by far the most powerful of all nations, in my opinion. But they have no way, no means, to achieve this, and it will never happen; and that is why they are weak' (5.3.1). A detailed and probably fanciful account of the unification of the Medes prior to their conquests pointed the same moral.[30] Another prerequisite for power was 'great wealth' to support one's armies, attributed to the Lydians (1.29.1, 32.5), Persians (4.1.1), and, implicitly, Assyrians (1.192.1). Those who enjoyed all these assets could be expected to put them to use in wars of conquest. Herodotus credited a king and queen of Persia with the sentiment that if a ruler with great power and wealth were to 'sit still, without acquiring another nation or power', he would not be 'a *man*' (3.134.2, 4).[31]

The limits of imperial expansion were dictated simultaneously by the gods and by logistics. Croesus' ambition to conquer the Greek islands was stifled because he simply did not have the necessary naval resources (1.27); his eastward expansion failed because the gods and fate conspired against him,[32] and, at the human level, because his army was too small (1.77.1). Herodotus blamed a lack of logistical support for the disastrous outcome of Cambyses' attempt to subject Ethiopia (3.25) and praised scorched-earth tactics as 'the single greatest, cleverest of all human inventions' (4.46.2), responsible for the failure of Darius' invasion of Scythia (4.83.1, 130). A wise advisor warned that a similar fate awaited Xerxes' expedition against Greece because suitable harbours and sufficient supplies were lacking, so that 'the two greatest things of all'—land and sea—'are your worst enemies' (7.47.2, 49). As for the inability of Xerxes' army to defeat heavily outnumbered Greek forces in the decisive battles, Herodotus' clear-cut explanation was that the Persians lost because the Greeks had, not greater courage, but superior military skills and equipment.[33]

Two obvious causes of the fall of empires, other than divine intervention, were defeat by even more powerful rivals and rebellion by

[30] 1.96–101; on its unreliability, see Sancisi, as cited in n. 26, above.

[31] See further below, p. 336, and Ch. 24, pp. 566–9, this volume.

[32] See Ch. 9, pp. 217–20, this volume.

[33] 7.10α.3 ('the best men both at sea and on land'), 8.68α.1 ('at sea as much better than your men as men are better than women'). Skill and equipment at Plataea: 9.62.3. Inferiority of Persian equipment: 5.49.3, 97.1. See also Hunter (1982) 176–201, and Ch. 24, pp. 564–6, this volume.

discontented subjects. The Medes were simply overthrown by 'the great army of the Scythians' which Herodotus reckoned among the largest of all time (1.103.3; 7.20.2). His accounts of the fall of Lydia and Egypt concentrated on moral lessons, rather than causes, but he did explain that the defeat of the Lydians was due to the scale, speed, and cunning of the Persian attack (1.79–80, 84). The Assyrian, Scythian, and revived Median empires were overthrown by their own subjects, who resented the 'slavery' to which they had been reduced and sought to regain their 'freedom'.[34] Herodotus assumed that the impulse to resist, like the impulse to rule, was the mark of a 'man'. Thus he had Croesus say that the only way to keep his 'manly and brave' Lydians (1.79.3) from rebelling, short of destroying them, was to deprive them of weapons, force them to wear luxurious clothes and to divide their time between leisurely entertainments and retail trade, 'and soon you will see them turned from men into women, and they will be no danger to you' (1.155.4).[35]

The full significance of this observation only emerges in the last lines of the *Histories*, where Herodotus flashes back to the crucial decision made by the Persians when they first came to power to stay in their 'small and rough' homeland. Migrating to a 'better' part of their empire, Cyrus had told them, would mean 'no longer ruling but being ruled, for soft territories tend to breed soft men, because the same soil cannot produce both spectacular crops and good fighting men'. So 'they chose to live in a barren land and rule, rather than spread their seed in rich plains and become other men's slaves' (9.122). The fundamental threat to imperial power—and political freedom—was thus a loss of masculinity as a result of living a life of ease.

In concluding his work on this note, Herodotus was implicitly formulating a historical theory about the rise and fall of empires, which sent a clear message to his audience concerning the best way to retain the freedom and power the Greeks had won for themselves.[36]

[34] 1.95.2–96.1 (Assyrians), 1.126–127.1, 3.65.6–7 (Persians). The Medes overthrew Scythian rule because it was arbitrary and violent: 1.106.1. Conflict within the ruling elite was supposed to have been a contributory factor in the fall of the Medes (1.123–4), and to have brought the end of the Heraclid dynasty in Lydia (1.8–13).

[35] 'Retail trade' was seen as the epitome of an undignified pursuit of wealth because it was thought to be concerned with nothing but profit-making and to involve deliberate deceit (cf. 1.153.1–2). In its way it was regarded as no less inimical to masculinity and martial valour than a life of excessive leisure and luxury was (cf. Aristotle, *Politics* 1258a39–b8, 1319a20–32).

[36] See further below, p. 343, n. 47; and Ch. 2, pp. 35–6, this volume.

'From small beginnings': the slow rise of Greek power

When the *Histories* turned their attention to the Greeks, their surprising emphasis was not only on the remote barbarian ancestry of the people and their customs, but also on the Greeks' humble beginnings and recent rise, in contrast to the great old empires of Asia and Egypt. When the Greeks first separated themselves from the Pelasgians, they were 'weak' (1.58), and for centuries this was how they stayed: even at the time of the Persian conquest of Lower Asia 'the entire Greek race was weak' (1.143.2). Herodotus did note repeatedly that the Greeks managed to muster a large army against Troy, as long as 800 years ago, but never without indicating his scepticism about the reliability of the tradition. Similarly, he dismissed Minos' thalassocracy, the other high point of the Greek heroic age, as not belonging to 'the human generation': it did not really count.[37] Herodotus went out of his way to minimize the significance of this thalassocracy, which might have been cited as an early peak of Greek power, roughly contemporary with the conquests of Sesostris. He acknowledged that Minos had subjected the Leleges who lived in the islands, but insisted that 'they paid no tribute, so far as I am able to tell from oral tradition'. Minos' naval power was thus not a true empire; moreover, his ships were manned by the Leleges so that they, rather than the Greeks, were 'far and away the most famous of all nations at that time' (1.171.2–3).

When the Persians arrived on the scene, the two most powerful Greek states, by their own feeble standards, were Sparta and Athens (1.56.2). The power of Athens, however, was impaired because the city was 'controlled and torn apart' by a dynasty of tyrants (1.59.1) who kept the Athenians 'weak' and effectively in subjection to Sparta (5.91.1–2). Not until the last tyrant was expelled almost 40 years later did Athens begin to be a real force: 'while the Athenians were under tyrants, they were no better than any of their neighbours, but when they were rid of the tyrants, they became by far the foremost state' (5.78; cf. 66.1). Cleisthenes' reform of the Athenian tribes was explained, characteristically if implausibly, as a symptom of this

[37] Scale of Trojan War (and doubts about reliability): 1.4.3 (cf. 1.5.3); 2.118.2 (cf. 'whether the Greeks tell an empty tale about what happened at Troy or not'); 7.20.2 ('according to the stories'). Minos not of 'so-called human generation': 3.122.2; cf. above, p. 334 with n. 27.

growth in power: the Athenians now wished to set themselves apart from the other Ionians (5.69.1), who were 'by far the weakest of nations' (1.143.2). Herodotus knew of Athenian overseas expansion under, and before, the reigns of the tyrants, but he chose to play this down and present Athens as a very late arrival on the international scene.[38]

The power of Sparta, on the other hand, was well established when the Persians made their appearance: 'the bulk of the Peloponnese was already subjected to them' (1.68.6). Yet even here Herodotus highlighted weaknesses. A flashback informed the audience that the Spartans had been 'just about the worst-governed of all Greeks and the most isolated from outsiders' until the reforms of Lycurgus, eleven generations earlier (1.65.2–4; 7.204). Afterwards, 'since they had good land and a large number of men, they quickly went up in the world and flourished' (1.66.1). However, instead of an account of Sparta's early successes, including the enslavement of Messenia (of which he was well aware, 3.47.1), Herodotus offered the stories of its unsuccesful attempt, only a generation before the emergence of the Persian threat, to conquer Arcadia (1.65.1, 66), its recent narrow 'escape from great troubles' in a war against Tegea (1.65.1, 67–8), and its most recent success in keeping hold of territory taken from Argos (1.82). Spartan history certainly could have been given a more positive gloss. Herodotus' version seems designed to reinforce the scathing picture drawn later in the *Histories*, according to which even this most powerful of Greek states merely fought 'battles over small pieces of not very good land and tiny boundaries . . . against equally matched Messenians, Arcadians, and Argives' (5.49.8). Sparta, like Athens, was as yet unknown to the Persians.[39]

The same pattern may be detected in Herodotus' treatment of the early history of other Greek states, particularly when compared to Thucydides' brief account of the same period. Thucydides also stressed the 'weakness of the ancients' (1.3.1), which he demonstrated at length (1.1.3–8.1), but dated the rise of the Greeks much earlier: the

[38] Earlier expansion: 5.94–5, 6.36–9. See Chs. 22 and 23, this volume, for different perspectives on Herodotus' treatment of archaic Athens, Sparta, and Greece at large, focussing on the extent to which it was shaped by his sources' selectivity and his own political beliefs.

[39] 1.153.1–2 (cf. for Athens 5.73.2, 105.1). For different perspectives on Herodotus' treatment of Sparta, see Vannicelli (1993) 21–96; Lévy (1999).

thalassocracy of Minos was a first turning point (1.8.2–3) and by the time of the Trojan War Agamemnon already had great power and a large fleet, even if he was short of money (1.8.4–11.2). For Thucydides, the next leap forward came with the emergence of Corinth as a sea power, about 300 years ago (1.13.2–5), that is, roughly the era to which Herodotus dated the rise of the Lydians and the Medes and the revival of Egypt. By contrast, Herodotus never even hinted that Corinth had at the time been a great naval power, although he had a good deal to say about early Corinthian history and was aware of the naval rivalry between Corinth and Corcyra cited by Thucydides.[40]

Second in Thucydides' list of 'the most powerful fleets' (1.14.1) was the navy of the Ionians, 'whose position was moving towards great things' and 'for a while during their war against Cyrus ruled the sea in their area' (1.13.6, 16). Herodotus pictured the Ionians at this time as 'by far the weakest of nations' (1.143.2), who despite brave attempts to resist stood no chance against Cyrus' armies (1.169). Even Miletus, 'at its highest peak and the jewel of Ionia', had no hope of becoming ruler of the waves without taking the desperate step of confiscating the sacred treasure of Branchidae, because 'the power of the Milesians was weak' (5.28, 36.2–3).

In the next generation, Polycrates of Samos 'made other islands subject to himself' to become Thucydides' third thalassocrat (1.13.6). Herodotus saw things differently:

> Polycrates is the *first* Greek known to us who conceived the ambition to rule the sea—other than Minos of Knossos or anyone else who may have ruled the sea before him. Polycrates was the *first* of the so-called human generation . . . (3.122.2)

Thucydides' fourth entry in the list, the Phocaeans (1.13.6), were elevated by Herodotus to 'the *first* Greeks to sail long distances' (1.63.1). The lack of resources which plagued Miletus affected even Herodotus' first two naval powers: Phocaea owed its impressive fortifications to a foreign benefactor, the king of Tartessus (1.163.3–4), and Polycrates was lured to his death by a false promise of financial help from a Persian satrap, who had told him: 'I hear that you are

[40] Herodotus on Corinth: 1.23–4, 3.48–53; 5.92β-η; cf. his near-silence about the Lelantine War (5.99.1) which for Thucydides was among the greatest ever (1.15.3).

planning great things, but do not have the resources to match your ambitions' (3.122.3).[41]

Starting with the first thalassocracy which he recognized, Herodotus began to offer a few indications of the resources of Greek states. Polycrates had 100 pentekonters, and later 40 triremes, as well as 1,000 citizen-archers and many mercenaries (3.39.3, 44.2, 45.3). The Spartans had about 8,000 citizen-soldiers (7.234.2) and kept Polycrates under siege for 40 days (3.56.1). Around 500 BC, Naxos had 8,000 hoplites and many warships (5.30.4), Thasos had annual revenues from its gold mines of up to 300 talents, used to build warships and fortifications (6.46.2–3), and Aegina had 70 pentekonters (6.92.1). At the time, the Athenians had had only 50 pentekonters; they later bought another 20, and managed to lay siege to Paros for 26 days; then a sudden influx of 'great wealth' from their silver mines allowed them to build 200 triremes (6.89, 132–135.1; 7.144.1).[42] The numbers of Greek ships and men ranged against the Persians during the Ionian Revolt and Xerxes' invasion were carefully listed.[43]

Herodotus, like Thucydides, believed that the power of the Greeks had grown 'from small beginnings' (1.58), and measured its growth in terms of warships, fortification walls, and revenues in gold and silver. In his *Histories*, however, he interpreted this development as even more recent and more limited than Thucydides made it appear in his *Archaeology*. In doing so, Herodotus created the starkest possible contrast between the cities of Greece and the empires of Asia, which he so painstakingly showed to be much older and vastly more powerful.

This vision of history implied that the Greeks had little hope of resisting incorporation into a barbarian empire unless they pooled their growing but still limited resources. The detrimental effects of division and the benefits of unity were accordingly a prominent theme

[41] Note however, Herodotus' reference to the Aeginetans as 'thalassocrats' at an unspecified but early time: 5.83.1–2. On the tradition of thalassocracy lists, see de Souza (1998) 277–88.

[42] Note the contrast with the Siphnians, whose mining revenues were distributed amongst the citizens and used to decorate public buildings with marble (3.57), rather than converted into ships and fortifications, and who were easily overrun by the Samians.

[43] Lade: 6.8; Thermopylae: 7.202–203.1; Artemisium: 8.1; Salamis: 8.43–8; Plataea: 9.28–30; cf. Mycale: 8.131.1. The inclusion of greater detail was of course not only a matter of choice for Herodotus, but also a reflection of his more detailed sources for events after *c.* 525 BC.

in Herodotus. The Ionians, he said, might have remained free men if they had taken the advice of their Sages and adopted at an early stage the 'good idea' that their twelve cities should form a single political unit, or, later, when the Persians had already conquered Ionia, the 'extremely good idea' that they should all join forces and settle in a single new city in Sardinia, where they would not only be free but 'rule over others' (1.170). The main obstacle to unity was that the Greeks fought among themselves for 'leadership',[44] just as the barbarians did:

> In the three consecutive generations of the reigns of Darius, Xerxes, and Artoxerxes [522–424 BC] . . . more bad things happened to Greece than in the twenty generations before Darius—some inflicted on her by the Persians and others inflicted by the leading states themselves *as they waged war over the leadership* [*arkhē*]. (6.98.2)

The consequences of this competition to lead took centre stage in Herodotus' account of the negotiations to form a general Greek alliance against the Persians. The Argives offered to join on condition that they could share the leadership fifty-fifty with the Spartans; when offered only a third share of command, they pulled out and said that 'they would rather be ruled by barbarians' (7.148.4–149). Gelon of Syracuse promised a spectacular 200 triremes, 20,000 heavy infantry, 2,000 each of cavalry, archers, slingers, and other light-armed, and supplies for the duration of the war, but withdrew his offer when the allies refused to let him have supreme command or command of the fleet alone (7.158–61). His reply drew the moral of the story: 'It seems that you have the leaders but will not have anyone to be led' (7.162.1).

Herodotus made the Spartans the villains of this episode, having them approach potential allies in the most abrupt and peremptory manner. He allowed the Argives to reply that 'the naked ambition [*pleonexia*] of the Spartans was intolerable' (7.149.3)[45] and Gelon to remark on their 'verbal display of arrogant aggression [*hybrismata*]' (7.160.1, cf. 158.1). His condemnation of their uncompromising insistence on being recognized as leaders is implied also by the contrast

[44] Again, Herodotus did not distinguish between 'hegemony' and 'empire' (see n. 14 above): thus, Argive 'hegemony' is *hēgemonia* in 7.148.4, 149.2, but *arkhē* in 7.150.3.

[45] He also made apologies for the Argives (7.152) and listed as mitigating circumstances for their refusal the recent loss of 6,000 casualties to Sparta and a discouraging oracle (7.148.1–3).

with the Athenians, willing to cede naval command to Sparta despite the vast superiority of their own fleet (161.2). Their attitude was singled out for explicit praise:

> the Athenians gave in, putting the survival of Greece first, aware that Greece would be destroyed if they were to fight over the leadership [*hēgemonia*]. . . . So they yielded, but only for as long as they were badly needed—as they made clear, for when they had driven back the Persian, . . . they cited the aggressive arrogance of [the Spartan regent] Pausanias as their reason for taking the leadership away from the Spartans. (8.3)

Herodotus also laid much stress on the internal unity of Athens, where faction and personal enmity were set aside in the common interest, and he explored the factional divisions elsewhere which often gave the Persians an excuse, and the means, to attack and subject Greek states.[46]

In writing a history concerned with the weaknesses of the Greek city-states at least as much as their strengths, Herodotus presumably intended to give his audience a long view of their small and modest role in world history until recently and of their still precarious position in the contemporary world—an intellectual broadening of horizons of the kind he attempted in his investigation of origins. At the same time, Greek victory over the Persian empire could only seem all the more astounding from such a perspective, a feat accomplished against the tide of history. Above all, Herodotus' way of looking at the past sent a message to the audience about how to retain their freedom and gain power. The Greeks' limited resources could be seen as a positive advantage, since they ensured the sort of austere and tough way of life which had brought the Persians first freedom and then domination over Asia:

> Poverty has always been with Greece, but our excellence is imported; it was won by our wisdom and powerful law, and by resorting to it Greece keeps poverty at bay and prevents subjection to a master. (7.102.1; cf. 9.82)

Provided the Greeks maintained this tradition and steered clear of both the luxurious, leisurely lifestyle and the undignified pursuit of

[46] Internal unity in Athens: 6.109–10 (generals co-operate), 121–4 (no treason); 8.79–80. Internal faction elsewhere: pp. 345–6, and Ch. 23, this volume; also Raaflaub (1987) 230–41.

profit which had turned the powerful Lydians 'from men into women', they might be able to emulate the Persians' success. After all, unlike the warlike Thracians who were potentially the most powerful nation in the world but as a result of internal division had not been able to stand up to the Persians, the Greeks had managed to join forces to preserve their independence. If they continued to put the common good first, they might prove capable of establishing an empire to rival the greatest in history.[47]

'The beginning of evils': causes of war

Herodotus' preface advertised his work as a world history with special reference to the causes of the war between Greeks and barbarians. Tracing the causes of conflict not only served as a narrative device, a theme around which the disparate histories of nations and empires could be organized, but was a serious historical pursuit for Herodotus. If his explanations often seem less than adequate to the modern reader, this is mainly because he tended to concentrate on what we would call immediate causes—in his view usually insults and injuries which called for revenge or punishment—although he was aware of, and often alluded to, underlying causes such as expansionism, acquisitiveness, and old rivalries. Moreover, Herodotus did not think of 'underlying' causes as inherently more important and true, nor of immediate causes as mere pretexts, but allowed for the significance of all kinds of causes, which might be delicately balanced. We may compare Thucydides, who, assessing the causes of the Peloponnesian War, cited a series of specific grievances but declared that the 'truest' cause was Athenian expansionism (1.23.6; cf. 6.6.1). He did not say that the latter was the real or underlying cause as opposed to pretexts or immediate causes: it was merely the 'tru*est*', most significant, in a hierarchy of causes, all of which were true. The reader who bears in mind these peculiarities of Herodotus'

[47] Although Herodotus warned against the dangers of excessive expansion (see Chs. 9 and 24) and competition for leadership, he evidently approved of the ambition to 'rule over others' as such (1.170; 9.122). His message was thus not only that the contemporary Athenian empire might collapse (so e.g., Moles (1996) 277–8, Stadter (1992) 807–9, Meier (1987) 53), but more positively and more generally that the Greeks—if they lived and behaved appropriately—might maintain and expand their power (cf. Raaflaub (1987) 247–8, Jouanna (1981) 7–11).

analysis of the causes of war will find it quite comprehensive and sophisticated.[48]

A simple and plausible explanation for the Persian invasions of Greece might have been that for two generations the empire had been expanding in all directions and that Greece's turn had come.[49] Herodotus frequently commented on the Persians' imperialist motives with regard to Greece. In 500 BC, a Persian commander tried to conquer Naxos for the sake of its 'great wealth and many slaves' and its strategic location as a springboard to Euboea, 'a large and prosperous island, as large as Cyprus, and very easy to capture' (5.31.1–3). In 492 and 490 BC, expeditions set out 'with the intention of subjecting as many Greeks cities as they could' (6.44.1; cf. 94.1), while the great expedition of 480 BC marched not only against 'all Greece', but against the whole continent of Europe.[50] As the Persians themselves were made to say, 'We have subjected and made slaves of the Sacae, the Indians, the Ethiopians, the Assyrians, and many other great nations, although they had done the Persians no wrong—just because we wanted to extend our power' (7.9.2; cf. 7.8γ).

Yet Herodotus took every opportunity to show that the Persian War had not been inevitable. Working our way backwards, we find that Xerxes was 'not at all keen' to march against Greece (7.5.1) and took a great deal of persuading by human and divine agency before changing his mind (7.6–18). His father Darius had initially been equally uninterested in moving against Greece; even when he eventually agreed to send out a reconnaissance party, he failed to follow up on it (3.131–8). Indeed, the Persians might never have reached even the Greek cities in Asia if they had not been provoked. It was Croesus who 'committed the first injustice' by attacking some of the Persians' 'innocent' subjects (1.76.2; 1.130.3); until then it had never occurred to the Persians to expand into Lower Asia.[51] The

[48] Causation in Herodotus: Hunter (1982) 201–4, 326–31; Gould (1989) 63–85; *contra* Evans (1991) 15–23, Hart (1993) 109–12, who claim that for Herodotus imperialism is the only 'real' cause, and Sealey (1957) 1–8 who claims that Herodotus acknowledged only the 'chain of grievances' constituting immediate causes. For the revenge motive, see Lendon (2000). For Herodotus' use of the concept of *aitiê*, see further Ch. 1, pp. 17–19, this volume.

[49] But this is clearly *not* Herodotus' view, *pace* Evans (1991) 3, 29–33.

[50] Greece: 7.138.1. Europe: 7.5, 7.8β.1, 7.50.4; cf. 7.8α.2 ('a territory as good and as large as we already possess'), 7.157.3 (Persians will move against Sicily).

[51] Croesus' advisor Sandanis says: 'I thank the gods for not giving the Persians

Histories pursued this theme back to mythical times in its opening story, according to which the Persians claimed that the people of Asia had been reluctantly dragged into 'enmity with the Greeks' (1.5.1). First, the Greeks chose to retaliate rather than negotiate when a woman was abducted from Argos. Later, it was the Greeks who started trouble by abducting a woman from Colchis and refusing to negotiate for her release. Finally, when the queen of Sparta was taken, the Greeks did not confine themselves to mere counter-abduction, but mustered a vast army and invaded Asia. For this decisive escalation, the Persians said, the Greeks were 'greatly to blame' (1.4.1).[52]

Persian imperialism was thus not a sufficient explanation for the Persian Wars. Herodotus assigned much of the responsibility to the Greeks themselves. In his view, Darius was reluctantly drawn into Greek affairs by Greeks pursuing their own private interests. The reconnaissance party of 'the first Persians who came from Asia to Greece' (3.138.4) was sent as a result of the machinations of the court physician Democedes, a Greek from Croton, who saw it as his ticket home.[53] Darius undertook his first Greek conquest as a favour to his Greek friend Syloson, who sought to win back the tyranny over Samos which his brother Polycrates had held (3.139–40). The self-interest of rich and powerful Greeks was also behind the punitive expedition against Barca (4.166–7), the failed expedition against Naxos (5.30), and above all the Persian invasions of 490 and 480 BC at the urging of the ruling families of Thessaly, and the sons of Pisistratus, still hoping to return to power in Athens.[54] A notable exception was Gillus of Taras, who was offered Persian backing for his return from exile, but turned it down 'so that he might not bring chaos to Greece', and relied on the help of fellow-Greeks instead. Herodotus admitted that this admirable alternative strategy

the idea of marching against the Lydians' (1.71.4); cf. 3.21.2–3 and Ch. 24, pp. 555–6, this volume.

[52] Herodotus questioned the historicity of this story, but its message was surely serious: the audience was invited to consider the possibility that the Greeks might bear some responsibility.

[53] 3.132–7. This story is often cited as an example of the frivolity of Herodotus' explanations (Derow (1994) 76; Fornara (1971a) 30), but he did *not* present it as a direct cause of war.

[54] Peisistratids: 5.96.1, 6.94.1, 102, 107.1; 7.6.2–5; rulers of Thessaly: 7.6.2, 5, 130.3, 172.1. In 480, the personal ambitions of the Persian commander Mardonius also became an issue: 7.6.1.

actually failed: the Tarentines ignored Gillus' Greek friends, who 'were unable to apply force' (3.138.3).[55]

Most crucial in bringing about the Persian invasions was the burning of Sardis, including 'the sanctuary of the local goddess Cybebe' (5.102.1), by Ionian rebels supported by Athens and Eretria. Darius' allegedly prayed that he might 'punish the Athenians' for this and instructed a servant to remind him of this duty three times a day; the 'overt reason' (*proskhēma, prophasis*) for his two campaigns of conquest against Greece was accordingly to punish Athens and Eretria.[56] The failure of both expeditions meant that the Persians still had a score to settle almost twenty years later, and Herodotus had Xerxes and his advisors constantly cite the need to punish the Greeks for 'being the first to commit an injustice'.[57] What is more, Herodotus stated as his own view that it was the Ionian Revolt and Athens' involvement which were 'the beginning of bad things for Greeks and barbarians', i.e., the chief cause of the Persian Wars (5.97.3).[58] It was probably this assessment of the revolt which led Herodotus to dismiss it as motivated by the self-interest of a couple of Ionian tyrants (5.28–38) who managed to embroil the gullible Athenians by 'deceit' (5.97.2); he might easily have presented it as a heroic war of liberation instead. He even went so far as to accept that the burning of the sanctuary of Cybebe gave the Persians a reason for burning Greek temples.[59]

No historian could have done more to assign a share of responsibility for war to the Greeks. Herodotus' only concession was to acknowledge the driving role of imperialism in Persia and especially in Lydia. Not only had Croesus' eastward expansion provoked the

[55] Syloson attempted to minimize Persian use of force, but this too failed: 3.140.5, 147.

[56] 5.105.2, 6.43.4–44.1, 6.94, 6.119, and 7.1.1, adding revenge for defeat at Marathon.

[57] 7.5.2, 7.8α.2–β.3, 7.9, 7.11, also 8.102.3 and 142.2 (Athens as main and original objective); 8.76.2, 8.100.1–2, and 9.58.4, adding revenge for resistance at Artemisium and Thermopylae.

[58] Cf. 5.28, 30.1 (new beginning of 'bad things'); 8.22.2 (Ionians reminded that 'initially our enmity with the barbarians stemmed from you').

[59] 5.102; 7.8β.3. It was probably because Herodotus accepted that the burning of Athens and its temples were punishment for burning the sanctuary at Sardis that he felt forced to conclude that this fate could not also have been punishment for murdering Persian heralds (7.133.2). See also Ch. 8, pp. 187–8, this volume, for the burning of the temple of Cybebe, and Ch. 23, pp. 528–31, for Herodotus' treatment of the revolt.

Persians, but he had 'been the first to commit unjust deeds against the Greeks' (1.5.3), often attacking without any valid reason at all: 'where he was able to find great causes, he accused them of something great, but against others he could only adduce feeble causes' (1.26.3).

Greek motives for waging war, in turn, were as mixed as those of their enemies. The appeals to join the Ionian Revolt which persuaded Athens, and nearly persuaded Sparta, mentioned saving fellow-Greeks from slavery (5.49.2–3, 97.2), but, as Herodotus told the story, they were mainly effective because they stressed the prospect of vast amounts of easy booty (5.49.4–7, 97.1), and even the possibility of the Greeks 'ruling over all Asia' (5.49.8). Sparta's conquests in the Peloponnese were, so far as Herodotus was concerned, motivated by greed (see above, pp. 338, 341–2). The Athenians were prepared to send out their entire fleet on the basis of a promise of 'a limitless amount of gold' in booty, without even knowing who their enemy would be (6.132); on this occasion Herodotus clearly deemed false the official justification that this was a punitive expedition for collaboration with the Persians (6.133.1).[60] At other times, however, the main causes of war had been of a less material nature: old enmities flaring up, revenge or punishment being exacted, old friendships being honoured.[61]

There were even occasions when Greek armies turned down a chance of profit. Despite an offer of money the allied forces persisted in a 20-day siege of Thebes in order to punish those who had collaborated with the Persians (9.87–8). The Athenians twice resisted temptation. First Xerxes made them an offer of freedom, as much land as they wanted, and restoration of all destroyed sanctuaries, in exchange for an alliance (8.140α.2, 9.7α.1), which they rejected or several altruistic reasons, 'first and foremost the statues and the temples of the gods, burnt and ravaged, for which we must at all costs exact the greatest possible punishment' (8.144.2; cf. 9.7α.2). In the very last action of the *Histories*, they are shown meeting this promise in the capture of Sestos. Its governor Artayctes had desecrated a Greek shrine, but promised both to restore the stolen sacred

[60] Another factor was the commander's private interest. Cf. 8.111–12, 121.1 (Themistocles).

[61] Enmities: 5.81–9, 8.27–30. Friendships: 5.99.1, 1.18.3, 3.47.1. Revenge: e.g., 3.47–9.

treasure and to pay a 200-talent ransom for his own and his son's life. The Athenians refused and instead crucified the governor and stoned to death his son before his eyes (9.120.3–4). Gruesome as this episode may seem, it was clearly meant to show that at this crucial time the Athenians were motivated by concerns other, and higher, than booty and conquest. In their fight against Xerxes, if not always before, they lived up to the ideal of Greeks who 'contend, not for wealth, but for excellence' (8.26.3).[62]

Herodotus' explanation of what caused the Persian Wars was scrupulously balanced and unpartisan to a remarkable degree. A seemingly naïve form—tales from legend and folklore, invented speeches and dialogues, as well as scattered authorial comment—belied a sophisticated content, in his analysis of causation as in the *Histories* at large.

Conclusion

If Herodotus emerges as a suspiciously 'modern' historian, there are of course deeply unmodern moral and religious dimensions to his work, explored elsewhere in this volume but barely mentioned here. The rise and fall of empires, the outbreak of wars, and just about every other historical event can, and often is, explained at a supernatural level as well as in secular terms. Imperial expansion comes to a halt when logistics fail or enemies prevail, but also when the gods decide that a conqueror is about to exceed his 'share'. Wars break out when expansionist drives, political interests, and legitimate grievances coincide, but also when the gods wish it. Some of Herodotus' historical explanations are even couched *primarily* in religious terms: the suicide of Cleomenes and the death in exile and disgrace of Leotychides were divine punishment for what these two Spartan kings had done to their rival Demaratus.[63]

Their strong religious element makes the *Histories* seem conventional (especially in comparison with the more limited role of reli-

[62] Cf. Boedeker (1988) 42; *contra* the idea that the episode hints at future 'barbaric' excesses of Athenian imperialism: Moles (1996) 276–7 and Ch. 2, pp. 48–9, this volume. See also Ch. 9, 215–17, and Ch. 24, p. 553, this volume.

[63] 6.72 (Leotychides), 6.75.3, 84.3 (Cleomenes). See for the supernatural dimensions of these matters Chs. 8, 9, and 24, this volume; and in detail Harrison (2000b).

gion in the work of Thucydides) and their moral values are reminiscent of commonplaces in archaic Greek poetry. But Herodotus' beliefs and values are not to be confused with his approach to the study of history, which was anything but traditional. He lived in a time when intellectuals were challenging the validity of all forms of knowledge, and he applied the radically critical attitude of his contemporaries to his chosen field of study: the past. It is thus, after all, no cause for suspicion or surprise if Herodotus' work emerges as 'modern' in some ways. For all their peculiarities of form and content, the *Histories* provide the essential model for the work of all later historians, ancient and modern: they were the first to make disparate recollections and records a subject of systematic critical investigation. It is Herodotus' achievement to have turned the past into history.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

HERODOTUS AS A CRITIC: TRUTH, FICTION, POLARITY

Paul Cartledge and Emily Greenwood

Herodotus' *Histories* contain numerous episodes in which the knowledge of truth is overwhelmed by power and authority. A succession of advisors, prophets, soothsayers, and oracles all 'speak truth to power', and, all too often, power is seen to prevail over truth.[1] Hence, in Book Nine of the *Histories* an unnamed Persian dignitary confides to the Theban Thersander at a banquet that, 'this is the worst pain a man can have: to know much and have no power to act' (9.16.5). As if to confirm that truth is impotent unless spoken from a position of power (*kratos*), Herodotus reports the proceedings of a Persian debate in which the opinion of Mardonius, the commander appointed by Xerxes, prevails (*ekratee*) because he has power, whereas the more prudent course of action suggested by Artabazus is rejected (9.42.1).

However, while truth seldom influences military strategy and policy in the *Histories*, it is present as a counter-discourse that frequently serves as a commentary on the vagaries of power. Hence in Book One, Solon, the Athenian sage and lawgiver, speaks his mind to Croesus, refusing to be cowed by the spectacle of power and wealth that the Lydian king stages. There is surely a political dimension to Solon's stance: in common with the Spartan envoys who refuse to

[1] The phrase 'speaking truth to power' is used by Edward Saïd to explore the question of how the modern intellectual confronts issues of power and authority (Saïd (1994) ch. 5). Examples of 'speaking truth to power' in the *Histories* include: the Pythia's predictions for Croesus (1.47; 1.53, 55); the Median Magi who tell Astyages that it is in their interests for their interpretations of his dreams to keep him in power, because his rule guarantees their safety and authority (1.120); the royal judges of the Persian King Cambyses who have to strike the right balance between upholding justice and keeping Cambyses happy (3.31.4); Prexaspes, one of Cambyses' courtiers, who forfeits his son as a result of speaking truthfully to Cambyses (3.34–5); the soothsayers of the King of Scythia who are put to death if the consensus of the soothsaying community goes against them (4.68); and Artabanus, Xerxes' uncle, who dares to contradict the king's proposal during a conference (7.10 ff.).

prostrate themselves before Xerxes (7.136), as a free Greek Herodotus' Solon stands up for what he believes to be true. However, there is also an intellectual dimension to Solon's stance, in that he refuses to pass judgment on Croesus' prosperity until the latter dies, thereby asserting a long-term view such as that espoused in the introduction to the *Histories* (1.5.4).[2]

We begin with the idea of 'speaking truth to power' because, as a freelance inquirer, Herodotus faced countless pressures. He had to establish authority for himself and, in many respects, to create the criteria according to which he wanted his work to be judged. Herodotus is sensitive to the popularity of epic poetry, the widespread influence of oracles and the balance of political power in Greece in his time. In the history of the reception of Herodotus' *Histories*, there has been a tendency to consider these different influences unworthy of the historian, but we hold the view that they serve to inform us about Herodotus' vision of the genre that we now call History.[3] Before we can pose questions about his reliability, we need to consider the nature of Herodotus' intellectual enterprise.

All too often scholars have lost sight of the fact that the debate about Herodotus' reliability as an historian is itself envisaged and indeed invited by the *Histories*. Herodotus has much to say about competing claims to authority across different disciplines and the credibility of these conflicting claims. He expounds the criterion that any rigorous account of an inquiry should submit to *elenkhos*, scrutiny (cf. Thomas (2000) 168, 208, n. 94). As he argues in his polemical review of Egyptian geography, the author who has written a tale (*muthos*) about the ocean takes refuge in obscurity (*es aphanes*), and consequently his account is inscrutable (*ouk ekhei elenkhon*, 2.23).

However reliable or fallible one finds Herodotus' methodology, he argues stridently for its scrutability and transparency. Among the promising developments to emerge in recent scholarship on Herodotus are those that seek to explore Herodotus' critical persona and to chart the rhetoric of his history writing (or his 'voiceprint', to use Robert Fowler's phrase).[4]

[2] In 1.86, several years after his encounter with Solon, Croesus acknowledges belatedly, the truth of Solon's judgment.

[3] Momigliano (1966a) offers an overview of the reception of the *Histories* in the Western historiographical tradition. Cf. Verdin (1975) and Evans (1968) for shifting perceptions of Herodotus' reliability as an historian; see also Ch. 1, pp. 4–5 this volume.

[4] Fowler (1996) *passim*; see also Ch. 12, this volume. For a recent example of

In the first half of this chapter we shall try to relate the debate about Herodotus' reliability to issues of truth and fiction as they arise in the *Histories*. We argue that Herodotus' conception of his role and the way in which different critics have conceived of this role must be central to the process of establishing appropriate conceptions of truth for the work.[5] In the second half of the chapter, we shall consider the limitations of Herodotus' outlook and the cultural constraints on his reliability.

Truth and or fiction?

One of the works which has made the strongest and most sustained case against the 'historical' accuracy of the *Histories* in recent decades is Detlev Fehling's *Herodotus and his Sources*.[6] Scholars have been quick to point out that Fehling's portrait of Herodotus as a pseudo-historian imports latter-day categories into the work;[7] indeed, Fehling himself ((1989) 253) furnishes this very objection:

> As for the pious assumption of modern scholars that the man who first thought of writing history must, if he had so much as an average sense of moral responsibility, have pursued an idea of strictly truthful narrative, that appears anything but natural to me. On the contrary it seems more natural to me that historiography should begin as a mixture of truth and poetry and should use the resources of poetry to present the truth.

Fehling finds fault with the generations of scholarship which have taken Herodotus on trust (though it is worth stressing that, in many instances, Herodotus' word has served historians very well). However,

study that examines Herodotus' scientific, geographical, and ethnographical claims to knowledge in the context of contemporary debates and terminology, see Thomas (2000).

[5] For a recent overview of Herodotus' conception of his role cf. Darbo-Peschanski (1998), esp. 143–54, offering a good discussion of the resistance of ancient Greek history writers to modern criteria for defining history. On the gulf between ancient and contemporary history writing, cf. Shrimpton (1997) 80–227.

[6] German original 1971. Cf. Armayor (1978 b,c) and (1985). Fehling's work has, in its turn, provoked a counter-study by Pritchett (1993) on the 'Liar School of Herodotus'—his term for the school of Herodotean criticism which focuses on the shortcomings of the *Histories* as an historical source. For a recent review of the debate on the status of Herodotus' sources and the work's historical accuracy, cf. Fowler (1996) 80–7 with n. 125.

[7] Cf. Dewald (1987) 31–2; also Darbo-Peschanski (1987) 87.

it is often the apparent failings of the work as an historical source which reveal the nature of the intellectual project in which Herodotus was engaged. To take one instance cited by Fehling, Herodotus contends that 'the names of nearly all the gods came to Greece from Egypt' (2.50.1).[8] A. B. Lloyd, in his Introduction to his commentary on the second book of the *Histories* attributes Herodotus' error to the logic of '*post hoc ergo propter hoc*' ((1975) 148, with 50–1).

We would like to stress the possible motivation behind Herodotus' claim. As suggested by Thomas Harrison, an important contention behind Herodotus' argument for the provenance of the names of the Greek gods is to put Greek history, culture, and religion in a broader context. Herodotus can put the Greeks in their place as 'late starters in the knowledge of the gods' (2.53.1).[9] In 2.50.1, Herodotus claims, 'as to the fact that they come from foreign peoples [*ek tōn barbarōn*], having made my inquiries I find the following to be the case [*eon*]'. Herodotus is explicit in making Greek religious practice derive from barbarian practice and underwrites this statement with a confident truth-claim (the neuter participle *eon* denotes what exists in actual fact). This 'Egyptification' of Greece (cf. Romm (1998) 101) informs us about Herodotus' provocative positioning of himself in relation to his audience and, while it might not score many points for accuracy, suggests an independent attitude which was to become one of the defining traits of the historian.[10]

This sense of independence is stressed throughout Herodotus' account of Egypt (Book Two of the *Histories*) as he takes issue with a range of authorities from disparate fields. As Rosalind Thomas has argued ((1993) 241), in this polemical section of his work, Herodotus is engaging in current intellectual debates: 'What we are seeing here is . . . an emphasis on the accuracy, determination, and insistence and achievements of the author and inquirer—and therefore his superiority to others.' In addition to correcting anonymous Greeks on the causes behind the flooding of the Nile (2.20–3), in Book Two Herodotus also supplements Homer's account of Helen's whereabouts

[8] Fehling (1989) 243: 'an astounding failure'.

[9] Harrison (2000b) 220, although Harrison also points out that Herodotus metes out the same treatment to other cultures. For instance, he exposes the insularity of the Ausaeans, who misguidedly think that their divinity (who corresponds to Athena) is unique to them (4.180.2) (*ibid.*).

[10] For the motif of the historian's cultural, political, and geographical independence, cf. Lucian's *On How to Write History* 41.

during the Trojan War with information gleaned from the priests at Thebes in Egypt.[11] The narrative of Helen's stay in Egypt, in which Herodotus shifts between alleged certainties and the stuff of myth, is embedded within a series of claims that limit Herodotus' liability for the stories which he mediates. At 2.29.1–2, Herodotus states that he can vouch for his account of the territory as far as Elephantine, on the basis of autopsy (*autoptēs elthōn*); however, South of this point, he was reliant on *hearsay* and inquiry (*akoēi historeōn*). Again at 2.99.1–2, we are informed that 'up to this point', his account has had the benefit of first-hand personal experience, whereas what follows derives from Egyptian informants:

> Up to this point I have confined what I have written to the results of my own direct observation and research, and the views I have formed from them; but from now on the basis of my story will be the accounts given to me by the Egyptians themselves—though here, too, I shall put in one or two things which I have seen with my own eyes.[12]

It is noteworthy that, even in relation to stories for which he cannot vouch, Herodotus does not relinquish his authorial guarantee altogether.

When we come to the section about Helen's abduction, Herodotus reviews the poetic accounts (2.116–17) and concludes that Homer was familiar with the true account, but that he was bound by generic considerations (the suitability of the different versions for epic (*epopoiiēn*)—2.116.1). As for the authority of the account, the priests claim unerring knowledge (*atrekeōs epistamenoi*)[13] for the events that took place in their region (2.119.3). The succession of qualifications and counter-qualifications might not make for consistency, but it gives the impression of a circumspect inquiry whose truths are conditioned by shades of uncertainty and whose mythical elements are analysed to yield an explanation for the processes which went into their making. As John Marincola comments, 'What these people or nations "say", together with Herodotus' reaction to it, is itself the validation presented by Herodotus for winning the reader's belief' ((1997a) 100).

[11] 2.113–20. On critical reflection on myth and myth criticism in poetry and early historiography, cf. Brillante (1990); also Ch. 7, n. 29, this volume.

[12] Trans. De Sélincourt/Marincola (1996) 119. All sizeable English quotations of Herodotus are from this work, unless otherwise stated. See also Ch. 1, pp. 15–19, this volume.

[13] On the terminology cf. pp. 357–63 below.

Furthermore, Herodotus' personal flourish is the lesson which he draws from the incident: the Greeks refused to believe the Trojans when they truthfully claimed that they did not have Helen (*legousi tēn alētheiēn*), because of the contrivance of a divine power which wanted to illustrate the harshness with which the Gods punish human transgressions (2.120.5). By concluding the episode in this way, Herodotus appropriates oracular authority for himself: with the words γνώμην ἀποφαίνομαι ('I will reveal the rationale') he reveals to his audience the design behind divine revelation. Here we see Herodotus in the act of competing with the allure of epic, while paying lip-service to the standards of rigorous inquiry and, for good measure, venturing a religious insight.[14]

Herodotus frequently displays a 'crédulité critique' which has seemed paradoxical to many of his modern readers. A helpful approach is that suggested by Paul Veyne, who has explored the attitudes of learned Greeks towards their cultural 'myths': 'criticizing myths did not mean proving that they were false but rediscovering their truthful basis' ((1988) 59). Fiction, that is, furnished endless material for critical redaction. This is only one of the many strategies which enable Herodotus to compete with other sources of cultural authority,[15] and to downgrade the intellectual credibility of those sources. As James Romm has observed, ancient geographers faced the challenge of reconciling their audience's expectations of strangeness and novelty with the commitment to representing real peoples and places ((1992) 173). He posits an opposition between the poet, for whom wonders are an 'artistic resource', and the geographer-critic for whom they are an 'investigative obstacle'. Herodotus appears to have it both ways, juxtaposing 'artistic resources' and intimations of critical distance from these very resources (cf. Moles (1993) 96). A common solution, which we encounter in the *Histories*, was to suspend belief and claim (merely) to 'report what was said'—*legein ta legomena* (7.152.3; cf. 2.123.1, 2.130.2–131.1, 4.195.2 and 6.137.1). At 7.152.3 Herodotus actually claims suspension of belief as a feature of the work as a whole.[16]

[14] Cf. Lateiner (1989) 63: 'The logic is unsatisfactory, but the polemical point and method are noteworthy: the truth about past events can be found by argument. Circumspection about knowledge of the past can lead to trustworthy results.'

[15] Cf. Finley (1975) 14: 'one kind of retelling of the past was being measured against another'.

[16] For an excellent inventory of the different gradations of Herodotus' knowledge-claims about various phenomena, cf. Lateiner (1989) 69–72. Headings include

In the different societies depicted in the *Histories*, knowledge and access to information are vital components in the struggle for power. In the early stages of the narrative, Croesus expands his empire and is subsequently defeated by Cyrus. This quick interchange of power is punctuated by Croesus' encounter with the Greek sage Solon, who refuses to flatter the king and speaks the truth (*to eonti khrēsamenos*—1.30.3). Croesus disdains Solon's insights, but is subsequently compelled to admit their truthfulness when he suffers a complete reversal of fortune and proclaims that he would recommend to all kings conversation with Solon in preference to vast amounts of money (1.86.4). Solon's insight into the changeability of human fortunes echoes Herodotus' statement in the proem (1.5) to the *Histories* that human prosperity is fickle. By aligning his position with that of a renowned sage and a contemporary source of authority, and by beginning the *Histories* with a sequence that bears out his forecast, Herodotus asserts the value of his work over traditional, more obvious forms of power.

Those in power are continually portrayed as trying to secure reliable information from oracles, and the obscurity of their dealings and the nature of oracular revelation function as a counter-example to the scrutable truths which Herodotus claims to dispense. At 6.80, Cleomenes protests that the Delphic oracle has misled him over the capture of Argos. When summoned back to Sparta he explained his confusion over the oracle and his decision to seek further clarification from the gods (6.82.1–2). At this point Herodotus interjects that he cannot comment on the truth of Cleomenes' account to the Spartans (*oute ei pseudomenos oute ei alēthea legōn*, 6.82.1). Cleomenes claimed that he learnt the certainty of the matter (*tēn atrekeian*) by the fire signal which shot out of the breast (not the head) of the cult statue of Hera (6.82.2). Here vocabulary that Herodotus usually applies to his own research is employed in connection with an inscrutable scenario, as related by an acknowledged madman.

While Herodotus refrains from commenting on the veracity of the oracle received by Cleomenes and the detail about Hera's signal, he devotes much attention to analysing the causes and symptoms of Cleomenes' madness, which he ultimately attributes to divine retribution for the latter's injustice towards his co-king Demaratus (6.84.3). Thus Herodotus claims to be able to infer divine involvement in

'Ignorance Universal', 'Certainty Impossible', 'Certainty Explicitly Achieved', and 'Responsibility Disclaimed'. See also Ch. 1, n. 40, this volume.

human events, but he achieves these inferences through a process of independent inquiry based on the realm of human knowledge.

In a carefully weighed statement in Book Eight, Herodotus claims that he is unable to refute (*antilegein*) the truth of oracles, in light of a particularly explicit prediction from the oracle of Bacis. Herodotus remarks that it is impossible to contradict an oracle that *explicitly* predicts what came to pass: '*enargeōs legein*' (8.77.1). After quoting the oracle, Herodotus reaffirms that he himself will neither dare to make refutations (*antilogias*) of oracles, nor accept them from others, given the clarity of this oracle: once again he uses the phrase *enargeōs legein* (8.77.2).[17]

However, the fact that Herodotus singles out this oracle for its clarity acknowledges implicitly that oracles are often obscure and hard to hold to account. By contrast, Herodotus' principles of accountability, which show to the reader the reasoning behind his conclusions, reflect the complexity of the known world. There is scope for oracles in the *Histories*, and indeed Herodotus is aware of their authority, but where their testimony is included, it is supplementary to the process of research. Hence, after presenting a closely-argued discussion of the geographical boundaries of Egypt, Herodotus remarks that the Egyptian oracle of Ammon supports his position:

> An oracle delivered from the shrine of Ammon, which came to my notice after I had formed my own conclusions, is a witness for the opinion that I have expressed about the extent of Egypt.[18]

Before this, Herodotus has considered the question of the geology of Egypt from several different angles, adducing (and rejecting) the theories espoused by the Greeks—and the Ionians in particular—(2.15–17). When he concurs with a particular school of thought, he is at pains to emphasize that he has reached the same conclusion independently:

> So not only do I believe the people who gave me this account of Egypt, but my own conclusions strongly support what they said. I have observed for myself (*idōn*) that Egypt at the Nile delta projects into the sea beyond the coast on either side and the shells which are visible (*phainomena*) on the hills . . . (2.12.1)

[17] On *antilogiai* in the works of Herodotus' (near-)contemporaries, cf. Thomas (2000) 250, 252–3, 264–7.

[18] 2.18.1–2. For the heavy accent placed on the first person as a way of highlighting a (polemical) assertion of proof, cf. Thomas (2000) 243.

Herodotus' concern to appear representative and trustworthy in his review of the debate invokes ideals of judicial procedure, and the motif of the judge who weighs up conflicting claims contributes to Herodotus' self-depiction as a reliable narrator.[19] In the section on Egyptian geography, he employs the verb *marturein* and the noun *marturion* (respectively 'to testify/bear witness' and 'proof/testimony') to underwrite the judicial metaphor.[20] At 2.18.1, the oracle from Ammon '*martureei*' (testifies) to Herodotus' judgment, and at 2.22.2, the warm winds are the strongest proof (*marturion*) that the floods in the Nile basin are not caused by melting snow.[21]

We have seen how Herodotus insulates his field of inquiry from the domain of oracles and the supernatural which are present in his account. A similar tension and potential problem for critical research arise in the case of seemingly incredible phenomena. The category of *thōmata*, or things which are *axiotheata* (worthy to behold), permits the inclusion of the sensational without compromising Herodotus' intellectual posture. On the one hand, he retains the credibility of the Odyssean narrator who offers his audience novel and astounding reports from the ends of the earth, yet at the same time he is not implicated in the more dubious aspects of these tales.[22] A typical example of the historian's negotiation of *thōmata* is the account of Scyllias' desertion to the Greeks (from the Persian forces) which involved crossing from Aphetae, on the Pelion peninsula, to Artemisium on Euboea—a distance of about ten miles (8.8). Herodotus reports the claim (*legetai*—it is said/reputed) that Scyllias made the crossing underwater, without coming up for air. The language of the passage is

[19] Cf. Marincola (1997a) 164 on the strategy of citing various versions of events to suggest impartiality; more generally, see his ch. 3 for a discussion of 'The Historian's Character', of which 'Impartiality' is a sub-section. Cf. Romm (1992) 183–4 on the importance of the character of the narrator for the believability of the account in Homeric poetry.

[20] On *marturion*, cf. Thomas (2000) 184 and 191–2. Thomas argues that while rooted in the lawcourts, this word was part of the language of proof in ancient science.

[21] For the motif of the historian as judge in Herodotus, Thucydides and Polybius, cf. Darbo-Peschanski (1998). For a historiographical survey of this metaphor, cf. Ginzburg (1991). For the [*h*]*istōr* as a possible model for Herodotus' status as judge in such passages, cf. Connor (1993) (for more on the [*h*]*istōr*, cf. also Floyd (1990)). Giraudeau (1984a) provides a discussion of the juridical terminology employed in the *Histories*. See also Ch. 1, n. 30, this volume.

[22] For a nuanced discussion of *thōma* in the *Histories*, cf. Hunzinger (1995), also Packman (1991) and Barth (1968).

informative for Herodotus' self-positioning in relation to the realm of the fantastic:

> As to the means by which he reached the Greeks from that position, I am unable to give a certain account (*ouk ekhō eipein atrekeōs*), but I would be amazed (*thōmazō de*) if the reports (*ta legomena*) are true. It is claimed that, after submerging himself into the sea at Aphetae, he did not emerge until he came to Artemisium, swimming about eighty stades through the sea to this place. About this man many other seemingly false (*pseudesi ikela*) tales are told and some true ones (*alēthea*) as well. However, concerning this matter, note my opinion that he reached Artemisium by boat.

Herodotus states that he cannot account for Scyllias' crossing to Artemisium with any authority, but distances himself from the fabulous report of the crossing, labelling it a *thōma* (by employing the verb *thōmazō*). The phrase '*pseudesi ikela*', whereby Herodotus dismisses the validity of many of the reports which have clustered around this man, evokes the already well-established debate in Greek literature on how to establish the veracity of a narrative and echoes the passage at the beginning of Hesiod's *Theogony* (27) where the muses claim that they can speak fictions (*pseudea*) which pass for truths (*etumoisin omoia*). Thus he scores veridical points by exposing the improbability of accepted accounts. As Hunzinger notes, 'l'expression θωμάζω εἰ . . ., quand il s'agit d'un étonnement d'ordre intellectuel, suffit pour capter l'intelligence qui désire une explication.'[23]

As with his handling of oracles, in the case of *thōmata*, Herodotus does not forgo the mythical dimension, which they can import into his narrative. Instead he circumscribes them with his own truth conditions. Herodotus points to his own 'good practice' by highlighting the gulf between the uncritical nature of popular lore in comparison to his more critical approach to the past.

One area of the *Histories* which has been particularly slighted by some modern critics is that of Herodotus' geographical researches.[24] As Romm observes, in Herodotus' narrative the distinction between what can be known *atrekeōs* (unerringly) and that which cannot maps onto the boundary-line between regions of the earth that have been seen or explored and those about which only wild rumours are told.

[23] (1995) 62. Translation: 'The expression θωμάζω εἰ, when it relates to astonishment of an intellectual kind, is sufficient to intrigue the kind of intellect that desires an explanation.'

[24] Cf. the works by Fehling and Armayor cited in n. 6 above.

When the extent of the lands which he is writing about exceeds the extent of his travels (or indeed of the travels of anyone whom he has met or heard of), Herodotus often ventures to say the unsayable. The result is a 'mythical' or 'fantastical' geography which uses all of the resources available to Herodotus' culture and surpasses the horizons of this very culture in attempting to represent the unknown.

In his account of Scythian geography (the area around the Black Sea), Herodotus mentions an epic poem called the *The Tale of the Arimaspians*, which he attributes to Aristeas of Proconnesus. This reference then occasions the story of Aristeas' unusual life and works. Once again it is instructive to note how Herodotus brackets off the different levels of his narrative. Firstly, Aristeas' account is designated as poetry (4.13.1)—a genre with its own conventions (cf. 2.116.1, p. 355 above). He then offers a story about Aristeas from hearsay, and the sign-post '*legousi*' ('they say', 4.14.1) acts as a credibility shield. Within this tale-within-a-tale, Herodotus introduces some of his own research, as it were. After Aristeas' alleged disappearance, the Metapontians claimed that he appeared to them in Metapontum (in Southern Italy). Herodotus proceeds to offer a chronology for the events related by the Metapontians:

> As to what the cities themselves say, I know (*oida*) that these events occurred two hundred and forty years after the second disappearance of Aristeas, as I discovered by inference (*sumballomenos . . . heuriskon*) in Proconnesus and Metapontum. (4.15.1–2)

Although strictly Herodotus is making a specific claim only about the time at which these events happened, the verbs *oida, sumballomenos* and *heuriskon* lend credibility to the tale in which they are implanted. Once again, we can observe Herodotus 'redeeming' fictional matter for his historical purposes. Similar subtleties are in play in the subsequent chapter, where Herodotus admits that nobody knows with any certainty (*oudeis oide atrekeōs*, 4.16.1) about what lies beyond the region which he has been discussing, but he then reassures his audience that he will relate, to the fullest extent, what he has been able to establish certainly (*atrekeōs*) by hearsay. This is not to accuse Herodotus of inconsistency, but to observe the delicate balance between what is and is not known and the ongoing process of extracting the former from the latter.

The terms which Herodotus uses to signal the veracity of his account reveal a broader preoccupation than that with mere accuracy or fact. In the above passage he twice uses the adverb *atrekeōs*

(unerringly), to mark out reliable information from vague report. The noun *atrekeia* (certainty) and the adverb occur fifty-one times in the *Histories* and align Herodotus' discourse of truth with that of archaic poetry.[25] The etymology which Chantraine ((1968) 135) suggests for the adjective *atrekēs* emphasizes the idea of 'being on track', as opposed to misleading information, which strays from the path of truth. Herodotus' predilection for *atrekeia*—and noteworthy avoidance of *alētheia/alēthēs* when staking his own claims to truth—suggest the image of the '*logōn hodos*', the route of the *logoi* which Herodotus traces in the course of his account (cf. 1.95.1, 1.117.2, 2.20.1). As Carolyn Dewald has remarked, the metaphor of the road contributes to the sense of strain and exertion behind Herodotus' historiographical project ((1987) 149, 165–6).

Hence the choice of *atrekeia/atrekeōs* evokes the potential for losing one's way amidst the many, heterogeneous, competing claims to truth about the past and about distant lands. At 1.140, Herodotus ventures a comment about Persian burial practice. In contrast to the preceding Persian institutions about which he could speak with certainty (*atrekeōs*) through knowledge (*eidōs*), Herodotus concedes that reports about the etiquette of male burial are obscure and as if a secret (1.140.1). By contrast, he unwaveringly attributes (*atrekeōs oida*) the burial practice in question to the Median priestly caste of the Magi, since they practise it openly (*emphaneōs*). He then concludes this section—a brief discussion of Persian *nomoi* prefaced with a confident claim to knowledge (*oida*)—by signalling his return to his previous account (*aneimi de epi ton proteron logon*, 1.140.3). The verb of motion *aneimi* implies that, having negotiated several details down an obscure byway, he will resume the more straightforward exposition (the highway, as it were) of his primary narrative.

It is worth recalling that, as well as coming to terms with Herodotus' particular approach to critical, historical research, there are also practical considerations which should be brought to bear on the reliability debate. Indeed, the intellectual and the practical considerations are interrelated. Jocelyn Small has given a convincing account of the technology available to historians in the ancient Greek and Roman worlds, showing how the limitations of the writing materials which

[25] For a recent suggestive study, see Crane (1996) 50–65: 'Herodotus' *atrekeia* versus Thucydidean *akribeia*: from knowledge to expertise'.

they used and the written sources to which they had access influenced their cognitive approach to history-writing. Small suggests that the concept or standard of 'accuracy as gist' is better suited to this technological environment than current notions of historical accuracy ((1997) 192).

Each generation of scholars will cast Herodotus in their own image. From the vantage point of current criticism there are new directions to be taken. One way of opening up the 'truth/fiction' debate is that developed by Pascal Payen (1997), who relates Herodotus' criteria for assessing true knowledge and insight to the ethnographical content of the *Histories*. Payen has concluded that the peoples who dominate in the power stakes are undermined by the powerless who outwit them by bringing counter-knowledge into play. This inversion reflects the position of the historical narrator, whose innovative research sometimes cuts across or directly contradicts the received assumptions of his Greek audience. In one sense the *Histories* raise the question as to who has the prerogative over the truth: the present, the past, one's native culture or foreign lands?

Polarity

'History is as much about the obviously other as it is about the seemingly familiar' (R. Evans (1997) 214). One seemingly obvious mode of 'othering' is the intellectual device of polarity or polarization.[26] In practice, though, this proves to be not quite as obvious as it may at first sight appear. For, on the one hand, 'other' is not, and should not be used merely as, a fashionable synonym for different;[27] and, on the other hand, 'polarity' may be applied in rather different meanings.[28] To make absolutely clear where we stand from the start, polarity or polarization in the rest of this chapter will be understood, in its ideal construction or as an ideal type, as the both logical and rhetorical figure of the binary opposition of same or self to its polar opposite, expressed in such a way that the two parts of the

[26] Cartledge (1997a) uses othering in the form of polarity as an exploratory framework for investigating Greek conceptions of self-identity; cf. Darbo-Peschanski (1985).

[27] For an application of (mere) difference in late classical and Hellenistic Greek philosophy, see Föllinger (1996).

[28] Compare and contrast, e.g., Gimelli-Martin (1990) and Taussig (1993).

opposition are both antithetical and mutually exclusive and jointly exhaustive of the category they together represent or designate.[29] Thus, to take the most relevant example of all for the purposes of this chapter: Greeks vs Barbarians constitutes a polarity in our sense, in that the two groups both are mutually exclusive and antithetical (a Barbarian is precisely a not-Greek and vice versa) and are jointly exhaustive (of the broader category Human Beings).[30]

However, there was in ancient Greece, as there is today, a rhetoric as well as a strict logic of polarity or polarization, whereby (mere) differences that are not logically polar or binary are employed *as if* they are, in order precisely to construct, that is invent ideologically, a supposedly binary opposition, or, more polemically, polar antagonism. An example would be 'Men and Women', since although there are irreducible, anatomical differences between men and women, objectively speaking, yet a human being can be more or less male or female, indeed at the limit sufficiently both male *and* female to justify or require the use of a third classificatory term (hermaphrodite).[31] Conversely, when it suits the political or other purpose or subtext of a writer, whether ancient or modern, a—logical—polarity such as 'Greek vs Barbarian' may be opportunistically modulated or moderated, in such a way that the notion of degrees of either Greekness or Barbarianness can be brought strategically into play.[32]

These two are just the most obviously fundamental polarities that Herodotus could have dealt with; others included Citizen vs Non-Citizen, Free vs Unfree, Gods vs Mortals, Old vs Young, Rich vs Poor, etc. How then does the device of polarization fit into his larger scheme of persuading the reader to give credence to his account of the *logoi* relevant to explaining relations between Greeks and Barbarians, and especially why they came to fight each other? What are 'we'—that is Herodotus's readers, whenever and wherever and however these ideal readers are taken to be situated—to make of it all? From considerations of space, we shall restrict ourselves here to just a small

[29] Lloyd (1966) pt I is an exemplary discussion from a philosophical standpoint.
[30] Cartledge (1997a) ch. 3 (with further reading cited pp. 188–90).
[31] Cartledge (1997a) ch. 4 (with further reading cited pp. 190–2).
[32] For various ways of 'inventing' the Barbarian in classical Greece, see, besides *op. cit.* (n. 30), Laurot (1981); Georges (1994); Hartog (1988); Hall (1989); Miller (1995). Hartog (1988), for instance, brilliantly shows how Herodotus' Persians become less 'Barbarian', i.e., more Greek, as they come into conflict with Herodotus' Scythians.

selection of examples of some of these oppositions in order to illustrate the potential range of intellectual deployment of polarity as a structuring or interpretative device in Herodotus' historiography.

Greeks versus Barbarians

It is with an example of polarization at its purest that we may usefully begin. Book Two, the Egyptian book, is in important part methodological. In it, that is, Herodotus stakes his claim vigorously to being an up-to-the-minute critical thinker, in a number of different ways.[33] The reason he gives for spending so long on Egypt and the Egyptians, however, is rather different: here, he says, he found more 'wondrous things' (*thōmasia*) and more narration-worthy monuments (*erga*) than anywhere else (2.35.1). Specifically, he goes on immediately to list in a *tour de force* of summative comparison the no fewer than eighteen ways in which the customs and practices of the Egyptians (*ēthea, nomoi*; cf. *Aiguptia ēthea*, 2.30.5) exactly reverse or invert those of the rest of mankind (by which he really means the Greeks). These specific inversions are all set within a conceptual and geographical frame that is precisely one of polar opposition:

> In keeping with the idiosyncratic climate which prevails there and the fact that their river [the Nile] behaves differently from any other river, almost all Egyptian customs and practices are the opposite of those of everywhere else.[34]

As François Hartog has remarked in another context, 'the interesting thing is that this space, which purports to be simply "space", is in reality a Greek space of shared knowledge'.[35]

Next, consider how in the first Book Herodotus chooses to modulate, rather than straightforwardly (re)present, the Greek vs Barbarian polarity with regard to the Persians. For Herodotus first asserts, with apparently privileged certainty, that the core components of the Persian educational system are horsemanship, archery and truth-telling (*alēthizesthai*); then, within twenty chapters of the same book, he represents the most eminent Persian imaginable, Cyrus the Great,

[33] A. B. Lloyd (1975); Thomas (1997); Vannicelli (2001).
[34] 2.35.2. Tr. Waterfield (1998).
[35] Hartog (1988) 350; cf. Jacob (1991); Payen (1997).

founder of the Achaemenid Persian empire, as characterizing—or rather, as Herodotus is at pains to explain, denigrating—all Greeks as liars and cheats (the specific reference is to their supposedly 'national' practice of buying and selling in an *agora*).[36] Here, therefore, we are presented with othering in the form of negative polarization or stereotyping on a grand scale—but from a Barbarian not a Greek point of view, and not therefore, ostensibly, from the viewpoint of the author.

Consider further a famous instance in which Herodotus at first complicates the process of ethnic comparison and contrast yet more. At 3.38 he has another Persian king, Darius, institute at his court in Susa a sort of moral contest between (some) Greeks and a particular group of Barbarians, in order apparently to set himself up in judgment over them both. The issue, or rather the *nomos*, at stake is that of the two peoples' respective funerary customs, surely the most sensitive marker of ethnic identity. Thus, so Herodotus' story goes, Darius is supposed once upon a time to have summoned some Greeks and some Callatian Indians to his presence and asked each of them respectively how much money (in bribes) it would require to persuade them to do the opposite of what they normally and normatively did to their kindred dead—that is, to eat them in the case of the (allegedly) cremating Greeks or to cremate them in the case of the (allegedly) cannibalistic Callatians. Perhaps Herodotus was also using the scenario to illustrate the mercenary quality of Darius's general outlook and attitude (cf. 3.89—the Persian equivalent of the Greek for 'retail merchant', *kapēlos*, was allegedly the Persians' own tag for Darius; cf. Kurke (1995) 54–5); but that was not what he claimed, by way of introduction, to be his *main* point. This was rather to illustrate a generalization that he states to be applicable to all human societies, Greek and Barbarian, however 'civilized' (by Greek standards) or otherwise: namely, the quasi-law that 'each group regards its own *nomoi* as by far the best', that is, the best absolutely speaking. In the story, both the Greeks and the Callatians indignantly reject the very suggestion that they might abandon, let alone reverse, their customary norms. Herodotus, however, is so impatient to get to the moral of the story that he does not allow his Darius to express a view on their rejection but proceeds directly to an

[36] 1.136.2, 1.153.2; cf. Cartledge (1997a) 60–2.

expression of his own view, or rather a repetition of his introductory point about the relativity (as he saw it, from the outside, in an observer's not an actor's view) of custom: 'So these practices have become enshrined as customs just as they are, and *I think* Pindar was right to have said in his poem that "custom is king of all"' (our emphasis).[37]

Men versus Women

That comment, as Herodotus himself said of another remark (7.152.3), could be taken to apply to the work as a whole. We shall turn next to Men vs Women, which, to repeat, is an ideologically constructed rather than a naturally given polarity. Herodotus' text, as a French 'structuralist reading' has so brilliantly demonstrated, explores the polarity in a number of ways, most conspicuously through his itemizing of the customary 'uses of women' by different cultures and societies, Greek and non-Greek.[38] Hence it emerges that the ideal polarity Men vs Women is something of a gross simplification: for here we find not just Men vs Women but also Greek Men vs Greek Women, Greek Men vs Barbarian Women, Barbarian Men vs Barbarian Women, Free Greek Men vs Unfree Barbarian Women, and so on.

Nevertheless, at one end of Herodotus' spectrum, serving to structure the many different individual accounts, is the normative Greek society practising monogamous marriage, while at the other (and also 'other') end is the most barbarous and barbaric of barbarian societies, that of the Androphagoi ('Cannibals') who do not recognize any conception of Right (*dikē*, 4.106; cf. Giraudeau (1984a)). The Greek way with women, one might reasonably want to infer, is therefore in Herodotus' eyes good not only for Greeks, according to their purely subjective judgment based perhaps on nothing better than unreflective tradition, but good absolutely—or at any rate superior to any Barbarian way. Yet it is a mark of Herodotus' ethnographic flexibility and intellectual subtlety that even the Greek norm is capable of deconstruction by him, both negatively and positively.

[37] Cartledge (1997a) 69–70 (with further reading cited p. 189).

[38] Rossellini and Saïd (1978); further reading cited in Cartledge (1997a) 191. See also Ch. 10, this volume.

Positively, in a complex dialectic involving relations between Xerxes and his various sub-commanders Greek as well as non-Greek, Herodotus is prepared to violate Greek norms of evaluative terminology by applying oxymoronically to a woman—admittedly, the Greek queen of his own native Halicarnassus, Artemisia—the descriptive-cum-evaluative term for bravery, *andreia*, that literally meant 'manliness' (7.99.1).[39] On the negative side, he presents his (Greek) addressee with Greeks who behave on occasion in a suspiciously 'un-Greek' manner (the Corinthian tyrant Periander copulating with the corpse of his widow is an in every sense spectacular illustration, 5.92η.2–3), and even with a whole Greek society, namely Sparta, where the norm seems at the least unstably established, at any rate among the royal families: here we find a king practising bigamy (5.40.2), another wife-swapping (6.61–62), another (royal) marriage happening by capture (6.65.2), a queen relating to her son a fancy tale (in the guise of a 'true story') of extra-marital copulation with a heroic apparition (6.69), a slave playing a key role in determining seniority in the royal succession by observing the nursing behaviour of a mother of royal twins (6.52.5–6), and so on.[40]

Nevertheless, in the context of the Men vs Women polarity what is surely crucial for the interpretation of Herodotus' overall authorial intention is that he (almost) begins and ends his work as a whole with exemplary tales of Barbarian Men vs Barbarian Women. This, he implies, is what Barbarians can and, typically, do practise amongst themselves: a Candaules of Lydia can breach the etiquette of marital privacy and feminine modesty to the extent of revealing his queen in all her nakedness in her bedchamber to his right-hand man, the captain of his guard (1.8–12); a Xerxes of Persia can so abuse the absolute power of familial disposal vested in an oriental despot by the harem system that he can seek to violate both the wife of a brother and a daughter-in-law and can thereby drive his own principal wife to extremes of 'oriental' mutilation (9.108–13).[41] Correlatively,

[39] Cartledge (1997a) 82–4 (with further reading cited p. 191).

[40] For insight into the inverted representation of Spartan sexual mores (by no means only by Herodotus), we are indebted to Ellen Greenstein Millender, the reworked book of whose 1997 University of Pennsylvania Ph.D. thesis, 'The Teacher of Hellas—Athenian Democratic Ideology and the 'Barbarization' of Sparta in fifth-century Greek Thought', is forthcoming. Meanwhile, see briefly Cartledge (1997a) 80–2.

[41] Cartledge (1997a) 84–5 (with further reading cited p. 192); see also Ch. 9, pp. 206–8, this volume.

it is implied, these are the sorts of abominations that Greeks must at all costs avoid.

Gods versus Mortals

However, important to Herodotus though the Greek vs Barbarian and Men vs Women polarities undoubtedly were, arguably the most important of all—as it was to, say, his contemporary (and possibly his friend) Sophocles—was that of Gods vs Mortals.[42] The polarized religious frame of the work as a whole is set early on: 'the divine (*to theion*) is entirely jealous [of mortals' prosperity] and a source of confusion', says wise Greek adviser Solon to oriental despot Croesus (1.32.1), whereas 'man' (in the generic sense, *anthrōpos*) is correspondingly 'entirely a matter of fortune' (1.32.4, using *sumphora*, a word which could also regularly mean disaster, i.e., mis-fortune, but not good fortune). 'Call no man truly blessed, but only fortunate, before he (or she) is dead', Solon continues, '. . . look to the end of everything to see how it turns out: for many are they whom the gods have deprived of prosperity and destroyed root and branch' (1.32.7, 9). Croesus' own confusion, in misinterpreting the words of Apollo's Delphic oracle, is proved to be as comprehensively disastrous as could be, and his end was very far from what he had predicted for himself. As for Great King Xerxes, the history's *homme fatal* (cf. 8.109.3, in a speech placed in the mouth of 'Themistocles', who echoes the judgment of 'Solon' at 1.32.1), he made the cardinal error of thinking himself not only the equal but the superior of a god (the Hellespont: 7.35; note Herodotus' own pious comment, 7.54.3). Contrast the Greek Spartans, who—like all (good) Greeks, only more so—sagely 'rate the things of the gods as more estimable than the things of mortal men' (5.63.2; cf. 9.7.1).

Yet it is not always what Herodotus chose to say but rather what he chose *not* to say that can be revealing of his deeper purposes. For apparently not all Spartans always obeyed their own religious doctrine to the letter. Both at home and abroad Pausanias, the Spartan regent who had commanded at Plataea, was judged guilty of overstepping the mark in arrogating to himself sole credit for that

[42] Cartledge (1997a) ch. 7, esp. pp. 159–62 (with further reading cited p. 196); cf. more generally, on Greek attitudes to foreign religions, Rudhardt (1992).

victory and in advertising himself as 'first leader' (*arkhēgos*) not only of the Spartans but of all the Greeks (ML p. 60). Yet you will not find a mention of that personal, quasi-tyrannical excess in Herodotus, who is generally sympathetic to Pausanias and made in his favour an exception to his stated rule of 'telling that which is said' (7.152.3). The story is to be found rather in Thucydides (1.132.2), who in an inversion of a distinctly Herodotean manner presents Pausanias as a paradigm, but a largely negative one. In line with Thucydides' brief account, the praise-poet Simonides had warned Pausanias to remember that he was merely a mortal, a warning all the more revealing in that Simonides had earlier been prepared to hymn '[great Cleo]mbrotus' most noble [son]' along with the rest of the Spartan heroes of Plataea in proto-Herodotean Homeric terms.[43]

Herodotus' lapsing into silence here—not to be confused with the religious silence that he explicitly practised elsewhere (e.g., 1.51.4)—would seem to betray a larger, properly political agenda.[44] For had he included that criticism of the Spartan regent, at such a climactic moment, his work's twofold message—to all Greeks to live up to the highest Hellenic ideals, and to the mutually antagonistic Athenians and Spartans specifically to place Hellenic *homonoia* above selfish city-state pride and particularism—would have been significantly muted (Cartledge (1990)). That message was a kind of 'truth' which—to borrow the terms of his own 'custom is king' anecdote—he could not have been persuaded to forgo at any price.

Envoi

It is perhaps contestable whether polarity in our sense was indeed a master trope of 'Greek' thought, and certainly it is crucial that we not only should be constantly on the lookout for exceptions or marginal cases, but also should not apply any crude version of it to the thought of a writer as subtle and possibly subversive as Herodotus. On the other hand, in the hands of a writer like Herodotus polarization could be another formidable weapon in the critical armoury, to be wielded against out-of-line, off-message Greeks no

[43] Warning: Simonides *ap.* Aelian, *VH* 9.41, with Huxley (1978) 245. Plataea elegy: Simonides *el.* 11, trs. M. West, *Greek Lyric Poetry* (Oxford, 1994) 169.

[44] The case for a political Herodotus is interestingly made anew in Thompson (1996); see already Hartog (1988) *passim.*

less than congenitally disabled Barbarians; in favour of exceptionally endowed Greek women as well as against stereotypically advantaged Greek men; and always on the side of the Gods (capital G) against mere mortals (lower-case m). On that, his hearers and readers could rely.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

HERODOTUS AND HIS SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Simon Hornblower

The study of sources, for which the word *Quellenforschung* has established itself in languages other than its native German, is not a fashionable activity at the beginning of the twenty-first century AD. *Quellenforschung* was rigorous, at times excessively so, in that it tended to assume complete rationality and a modern scientific attitude (preference for the earlier and 'better' over the later and more derivative source, and so forth) on the part of the ancient authors it studied. It assumed, in fact, that ancient authors with their unwieldy and arbitrary collections of papyrus rolls operated like modern scholars in their libraries, who read and write in rooms furnished floor-to-ceiling with shelves which contain good and instantly accessible texts, and who are armed with author-specific lexica and (nowadays) with electronic data-bases which enable them to chase linguistic parallels in a few seconds of time (see Hornblower (1994a) 71 f.). The present chapter is an attempt at the looser rather than the stricter enterprise; it is concerned with what is now known as 'intertextuality' rather than *Quellenforschung*: in fact, with Herodotus' relationship to his literary sources (the relationship of his text to other texts) and to his oral sources (one aspect of the relationship of his text to the world).

How did he handle his sources? How did he acquire and select his material? Why did he sometimes offer critical judgments on his sources but at other times refuse to do so? What criteria did he apply in making critical judgments, and to what extent was he prepared to extrapolate and generalize on the basis of his sources? These are some of the topics I address in the present chapter. Some are of course very hard to answer except by the historical novelist: nobody after 2,500 years can easily say *why* Herodotus followed a particular course of action on some occasions but declined to follow it on others. At most we can try, at the level of detail, to identify patterns of choice and suggest how those patterns might be compatible with broader literary strategies (the pattern in the carpet, as Henry

James called it). There is no guarantee that the historical Herodotus would accept our interpretation even if it could be explained to him.

The present chapter does not accept the results of Fehling's attempt (by no means the first but the most ingenious and thorough-going so far) to show that Herodotus' source-citations are imaginary.[1] Some of Fehling's views will be discussed below.

The notion of 'sources' is easy for us to grasp and to subdivide: oral sources and written sources, individual oral informants and generic oral citations; documentary and non-documentary (poetical, historical, etc.) written sources. These ideas and categories are ours; there is no single and simple Greek word even for 'source'. This is one difficulty. We would want to say that Herodotus uses all the types of source I have just mentioned, although his specific citations of individual named Greek informants are just two in number: Archias of Sparta at 3.55 and Thersander of (Boeotian) Orchomenus at 9.16.[2] He also cites simultaneously three named priestesses at Dodona at 2.55.3 (Promeneia, Timarete, Nicandra), a rather special case; and he cites one non-Greek, Tymnes agent of Ariapeithes (4.76.6). Precisely the rarity of such individual attributions shows that he did not regard a circumstantial 'I got this from X' claim, where X is a named individual, as conferring any special authority. Generally, Herodotus does not arrange the types of source, which I have given above, in any sort of hierarchy. We certainly cannot assume that he would have given automatic priority to written over oral sources: it has been said recently (Shrimpton (1997) 119 f., cf. 118) that 'Herodotus quotes certain inscribed texts more for celebration than for proof'. But equally we are not entitled to think he would have rated oral sources higher than written ones. Nor can or should we assume that he regarded an appeal to the authority of a source as superior to the exercise of his own intelligence, or to an argument from analogy. It has been pointed out (Luraghi (2001) 142) that he defends his claim that a Persian advocated democracy not by a source-reference but by pointing out that Mardonius installed democracies in Asia Minor some decades later (6.43, referring back to 3.80 ff.).

[1] Fehling (1989). The most recent account and list of Herodotus' source-citations is by Shrimpton and Gillis in Shrimpton (1997) 229–65 = Appendix 1, with list at 249–65; see 231 for the claim that Fehling's examination 'lacks statistical rigour', and (earlier in the page) their conclusion that 'there is no compelling reason to regard items of information attributed to sources as Herodotean fictions'.

[2] Whose name is given wrongly as Thrasybulus in Fehling (1989) 117.

A second difficulty is that Herodotus, unlike Thucydides, has no initially-placed programmatic statement about how he has used his sources. The relevant chapter of Thucydides (1.22) is so famous that it is hard to grasp how original it must have been, in some of its aspects, when first formulated. Thucydides distinguishes between narrative and speeches, an obvious distinction once made, but there is no comparable explicit statement of this awareness in Herodotus. Thucydides says it was hard for both himself *and for his informants* to remember what was said (there follows his celebrated claim to have compromised between reporting the essence of what was actually said, and giving what was rhetorically appropriate). That he treats speeches before narrative may be interesting in itself for its implications about priorities, uncongenial though those implications may be for us, who like to think that Thucydides was more preoccupied with the demands of his rigorous narrative than with the rhetorically elaborate speeches of which his History is so full. He goes on to state his principles about narrative: he has not derived his accounts of events from *chance informants*, nor put down his own opinion, i.e., offered reconstructions according to ideas of his own, but has subjected to close scrutiny both the events he himself witnessed and those he learnt about from others. Bias and faulty memories of witnesses, leading to inconsistent accounts, made this a hard job.

Here, perhaps, we have more than a personal statement; we have the first critique of Herodotus (not forgetting Thucydides' other predecessors, note the sweeping 'all my predecessors' at 1.97.2). The expression 'not from chance informants or my own reconstruction' is an example of what students of narrative ('narratologists') call 'presentation through negation'.[3] The negative formulation implies 'not, as is usually done', or even 'not, as my predecessors have done'. If Herodotus is the main target here, or even one of the targets, it seems that Thucydides did not think much of the informants he took Herodotus to have used, nor did he like the way Herodotus intruded his own reasoning, as in the Persian democracy example mentioned above. But it is noteworthy that even Thucydides, though unlike Herodotus he cites raw documents, including two in dialect, does not mention documents in this methodological chapter (Shrimpton (1997) 101), though to our way of thinking, use of documents would be an obvious way of asserting his own superiority to Herodotus.

[3] De Jong (1987) 61–8; Hornblower (1994b) 152–8.

How far was Thucydides' criticism of Herodotus—if that is what it is—justified? If Thucydides meant that Herodotus was uncritical in his choice of sources, the criticism was as we shall see very unfair. But Herodotus laid himself open to it in two ways: first by not setting out his method fully and initially, as Thucydides later did, and secondly by saying on two separate occasions that he regarded it as his job, throughout his work, simply to record what each informant said to him (see 2.123.1 and 7.152.3, where he adds that he is not obliged to believe everything he reports). It is easy to see how this hospitable attitude could be misinterpreted as naive and uncritical.

Did Herodotus really talk to just anybody? Certainly not; if we are interested in the attitudes and behaviour of people other than elites (a problem facing all inquiry into ancient history) we cannot look to Herodotus for help. Anthropologists speak of the 'social surface' of the traditions preserved.[4] That is an expression for the group from which the tradition stems, and which believes it to be true. The social surface of the traditions in Herodotus is constituted by an intellectual and social elite, whoever exactly he wants us to understand by the *logioi* whom he quotes explicitly three times (1.1.1, where they are Persians, 2.3.1 and 2.77.1 where they are Egyptians; cf. also 4.46.1 of Anacharsis the Scythian). The word *logioi* means (so Gould (1989) 27) 'those with something to say', 'those with a story to tell', and, in the third instance, 'those who made a practice of the memory of the past'.[5] For Nagy ((1987) 181), Herodotus is himself by implication presented at the very beginning of his *Histories* as one in a long line of *logioi*. However this may be—and Lang ((1987) 204) reasonably objects that Herodotus uses the word only of foreigners, which if it expresses a principle would disqualify himself—it is clear that the appeal to *logioi* is not an appeal to chance informants. That is certainly true both of Archias of Sparta, a member of a distinguished family, one of whose members was honoured with public burial at Samos (an outstanding honour, otherwise well attested only at Athens); and of Thersander of Orchomenus, who was a participant at a very grand banquet, and indeed is expressly called one of the most *logimoi* men in Orchomenus (i.e., 'distinguished',

[4] Luraghi (2001b) 159; Giangiulio (2001) 135, drawing on the Africanist Moniot (1970) 134 f.

[5] Nagy (1987) adds more speculatively that the function of *logioi* is to confer *kleos*, 'glory', and suggests that they are thus assimilated to *aoidoi* (poets, singers); on Nagy's approach, see also Ch. 1, pp. 10–12, this volume.

'important'; not the same word as *logios* though etymologically related to it).

But neither the handful of explicit references to *logioi*, nor the two named informants Archias and Thersander, get us far enough. We need to look at evidence in bulk. Before we do so, however, we should note in fairness to Herodotus that when it comes to actual practice, as opposed to statements of method, Thucydides gets us even less far: there are in *his* History absolutely no citations of individual named sources, though naturally inferences can be drawn, especially when he names an individual;[6] thus Thucydides once (2.5.6) reports a discrepancy between what the Plataeans and Thebans say about some prisoners, and he repeats another between the Athenians and Spartans about when Scione was captured (4.122.6). On the second occasion he adjudicates magisterially between the two versions: 'the truth was more on the Athenian side'.

Let us return to the Herodotean evidence in bulk. There are two main categories: first, those passages where no source is stated but where it is possible to infer the identity of the source (naturally this method also takes account of, but is not the prisoner of, explicit source-citations where they occur embedded in the section of narrative in question); and second, those passages introduced, concluded, or framed by explicit source-citations (9.82 is an example of such 'framing', where a passage is both introduced and concluded by an 'it is said' formula which turns it into a simple compositional 'ring'; see Shrimpton and Gillis in Shrimpton (1997) 234).

The job of identifying Herodotus' unstated sources by inference was carried out by the traditional and eventually very sophisticated techniques of *Quellenforschung*, always alert to the evidential weight of bias; the high-water mark of this technique was Jacoby (1913) cols. 419–67, 'Quellenanalyse des Werkes'. After Jacoby, as after any patient genius, things could not be done better, they could only be done differently. Modern scholarship has lost interest in identifying unspecified sources, but it remains true that for large tracts of Herodotus, Jacoby's long and systematic analysis, book by book, is usually the best place to discover where Herodotus probably got it

[6] His practice over naming is nearly twice as sparing as Herodotus, so that Thucydidean naming is arguably and occasionally a way of flagging a source, see Hornblower (2000). Even group citations are very few (Hornblower (1994b) 136).

from.[7] The central Greek sanctuary of Delphi featured extensively as the location of informants in Jacoby's tabulated treatment (with occasional reservations, see Jacoby (1913) col. 402, where he suggests that the Delphian element in the Lydian *logos* or ethnographic section in Book One was added only quite late as part of an 'Umarbeitung' or reworking). This stress on Delphi as a source for Herodotus if anything became more pronounced in the course of the twentieth century (see e.g., Flower (1991)), as the study of Greek religion moved from the margins to the centre of the scholarly stage (Davies (1997) 31). 'The Delphians' are explicitly named as a source very early in the History (1.20, on which see however Fehling (1989) 91), but their evidence is far more pervasive than the explicit citations would suggest. Colonization, for instance, is a theme which recurs all over the History, and it is likely that Herodotus derived much knowledge in this area from the servants of Apollo at Delphi, whose role in the founding of overseas settlements was so large.[8] Progress has also been made, since Jacoby's time, in identifying Herodotus' unstated Persian informants: Lewis (1985), followed by Murray (1987) 110, suggested that one of Herodotus' sources for Persia was the Greek element in the Persian bureaucracy.

Now for our second category, the explicit source-citations—a much more fashionable object of study in the early twenty-first century. They are governed by two principles; it is an odd fact that though they were established or most clearly and pithily formulated by the sceptical Fehling, they are accepted as valid account of Herodotus' working method even by those scholars (Shrimpton and Gillis in Shrimpton (1997) 231; Luraghi (2001b) 148) who disagree with the negative conclusions which Fehling draws from them. The principles are: (1) the principle of citing the obvious source, and (2) the principle of regard for party bias. Clearly, these principles might be followed by a writer of plausible fiction, but also by an honest writer who did interrogate his sources.

[7] 'Usually', not 'always'. For a powerful but curiously understudied (because repellent?) section of Herodotus, see Hornblower [forthcoming], an analysis of the story (involving castration and possibly worse) of Hermotimus and Panionius at 8.104–6; Jacoby (1913) fastidiously ignores it.

[8] Forrest (1957); Malkin (1987); Murray (1987) 105.

The first principle ('the basic rule on which everything else is founded': Fehling (1989) 88) assumes that Herodotus distributed his source-citations 'according to the usual principle of considering who can be supposed to know what' (Fehling (1989) 92). The 'obvious source' is usually an 'epichoric' or regional source. The statement that the Libyans say that cauterizing their children makes them the healthiest of mankind (4.87) is said by Fehling to be an example of Greek theory, falsely attributed to the Libyans because they are the appropriate people to say it. But Fehling's critics observe that this sort of attribution is sometimes best understood not as palpable fabrication or fraud but as a statement about the social surface (see above), the social dimension, of the material reported: 'people are simply made to say, think or report what he supposes any reasonable person would expect them to do' (Shrimpton (1997) 109, quoted by Luraghi (2001) 148 n. 27). In any case, Herodotus may sometimes attribute an item to a source, not in order to verify the information but precisely in order to distance himself from it (Shrimpton (1997) 112; see further below).

Divided source-attributions, i.e., instances where part of a story is attributed to one group, part to another, are explained by Fehling on similar lines, thus the main report of the miraculous appearance of two superhuman figures at Delphi (8.36–7) is assigned to the Persians, but the names of the figures are assigned to the Delphians, who alone could reasonably be expected to 'know' them; but the attributions must—we are told—be false because the whole story assumes that there really was such an event, which in the real world there was not (Fehling (1989) 12–17). Therefore the story has not two origins but one—inside Herodotus' head. This line of approach takes for granted a modern (or Thucydidean) attitude to divine epiphanies: obviously, they did not really happen. Herodotus is not so sure or so dogmatic (see below, pp. 381–2, on Pan, for the care he takes to distance himself by invoking what other people said or believed), and his contemporaries are more likely to have shared his attitide than Thucydides', or ours.

Another 'divided' story, the death of Miltiades, illustrates principle no. 2: regard for 'party bias' (Fehling (1989) 106 ff.). The people of Paros diverge from the story told by the rest of the Greeks in that the Parians say Miltiades died because of an impiety committed on Paros. Is this 'unrealistic' so as to 'give rise to doubts'

(Fehling (1989) 106)? On the contrary, the local stress on the local aspect is entirely natural and plausible, and any Greek would have found it so (on party bias, see Luraghi (2001) 148).[9]

It is, however, unsatisfactory to discuss Herodotus' use of sources as if it were uniform throughout the whole of his enormous text, or uniform from topic to topic. I shall now try to identify some of the differences in the way he handles his material on different occasions.

Let us first look at his different behaviour in different parts of the work. One obvious way of declining to offer a critical judgment on his sources is by presenting his material with no source-attribution at all, thus implying that he accepts the deliverances of his sources or else that he has made a choice between them, or else that he has combined them in some undisclosed way; but in any case he is happy with the result. This, we may say, is the seamless, Thucydidean, approach. In a new and massively well-documented study it has been shown (Shrimpton and Gillis in Shrimpton (1997) 232–49) that source-citations preponderate in the earlier books, especially Books Two (Egypt), Three (Persia) and Four (Scythia; Libya). Book Nine by contrast, which deals with events much closer to Herodotus' own time, and is mainly about Greece, exhibits a very small number of source-citations. The statistical tables are impressive, and show that Herodotus is readier to give citations when dealing with events remote in time, geography, or culture. 'The inference is clear: when Herodotus feels that the item is reliable knowledge, no source citation is required, but an otherwise identical item that cannot be confidently advanced as knowledge is attributed to a source' (Shrimpton (1997) 245 f.; cf. Marincola (1987) 133: 'after Book II he does not detail his travels and the people with whom he came into contact'; see also 132 and 134, discussing the different approach in Books Five to Nine).

Herodotus varies his technique not just progressively through the work but when handling certain specially sensitive topics. I shall confine myself to two, religion and Athenian pre-Persian-War politics. Two fairly recent treatments, by Gould (1994) and Badian (1994), are concerned with different aspects of Herodotus, the religious and the political, but both use the word 'reticence' to describe the problems they have identified.[10]

[9] Note in any case that a Delphic source probably lies alongside the Parian, see Jacoby (1913) col. 445.

[10] Gould (1994) 92, citing Lateiner (1989) 64 ff.; Badian (1994) 127, 'Herodotus' reticence about unpalatable facts'.

Gould has shown that one area where Herodotus was specially sensitive, even embarrassed, was religion, and that this coyness extends to his attitude to his sources for it—notwithstanding his important line of communication to Delphi (above):

> Herodotus sometimes feels that he requires additional weight of evidence, that it is or may be impossible to identify the power concerned or be certain of its motive, and that such reports may be better distanced from the rest of the surrounding narrative by being given in *oratio obliqua* [indirect speech]. (Gould (1994) 96)

Gould offers a good example, the story of Aristodicus at Cyme (1.153–160).

Another example, which I have discussed in a different connection elsewhere (Hornblower (2001)) is the epiphany or divine appearance of Pan (6.105–6). The Arcadian god was supposed to have appeared to the runner Philippides, on his way from Athens to Sparta to appeal for help just before the Battle of Marathon in 490. 'As Philippides himself used to say and as he told the Athenians'—note that this formulation does not necessarily imply that Herodotus personally spoke to him—he had an encounter with Pan in Arcadia, and Pan reproached the Athenians for not honouring him with cult because

> he was favourably disposed to the Athenians, had been useful to them in the past and would be useful again. After the battle, when the Athenians' affairs had turned out well, they believed that what Philippides had said was true and built a shrine to him . . . But on this occasion [in 490] he was sent out on the mission on which he said he had seen Pan.

This chapter is full of interest. The distancing devices are plain: 'as he used to say', 'as he told the Athenians', 'on which he said he had seen Pan'. But a doubt remains. The cryptically vague reference to the Athenians' affairs 'turning out well' has been interpreted as an acknowledgment by Herodotus that Pan actually sent help during the Battle of Marathon in the form of a panic (Pan-ic) attack inflicted on the Persian army.[11] If Herodotus does mean to imply that there was a Pan-sent panic in the Persian army during the battle,

[11] Though this is not agreed: some scholars say that Pan sent panics only to armies at rest, for instance at night. See Borgeaud (1988) 136; Parker (1996) 164 and n. 36, who is more favourable than is Borgeaud to the idea that Pan might have sent his own panic attack.

in other words that there was a *second* and more public epiphany of Pan, it is surprising that he makes no mention of any such thing in his actual battle-description a few chapters later. However, this could be just another instance of Herodotean reticence. The first epiphany is given as something claimed by Philippides, and believed by the Athenians—but only after the second epiphany had provided corroboration for the first. The reporting of the sources is very carefully and unobtrusively managed, and it leaves the issue of Herodotus' own belief strictly unresolved. But there is in the course of the chapter a gathering sense that the epiphany of Pan (perhaps only auditory not visual, see Versnel (1987) 49) was more than a touch of the midday sun.[12]

Religion was not the only area calling for occasional obliqueness and selectivity (a topic I shall address more fully in a moment) in the handling of source-material. Certain political issues were almost equally sensitive and for the same reason. 'Herodotus took great care not to give offence to the powerful, or those who might be: the gods of course, Egyptian no less than Greek . . .' (Badian (1994) 120).[13] We can accept that in the normal run of cases, Herodotus cheerfully transmitted 'party bias' (see above) by recording versions in the form 'x is what the people of y say', where x is to the advantage of y (or where x is disobliging to z, who are the enemies of y). But it has been ingeniously shown (Badian (1994), a study in 'subtle silences') that Herodotus hints very delicately indeed at the reasons why Alexander I, king of Macedon was honoured at Athens. Not just for providing ship-building timber, but for mediating the Athenian submission to the Great King of Persia in the late sixth century BC, a submission which looked bad in the period after the Persian Wars of 490–479 BC when the Athenians were the saviours of Greece, at least in Herodotus' presentation (7.139). The facts are there, above all at the end of the crucial chapter (5.73) when Herodotus says that the Athenian ambassadors who made an alliance with the Persian king were 'held in great blame' on their return; what he does *not* say (although modern scholars have incautiously taken him to be saying it) is that the Athenians repudiated the alliance. They did not. 'The fact that he does not say so, but uses a vague phrase about

[12] See further below p. 384, citing Harrison.

[13] He then proceeds to list some powerful human individuals and groups whom Herodotus was also careful not to offend.

blaming the envoys, once more reveals his technique when he has something to hide' (Badian (1994) 126). His sources left him in no doubt of the truth, but he could not be explicit. ('It is surely inconceivable that Herodotus was told that Alexander was *euergetes* [benefactor] of Athens, but not told why . . . We are forced to conclude that Herodotus deliberately chose to withhold the information' (Badian (1994), 122). Too much was at stake, in the mid fifth century when Athenian heroism against the Persians had become a national myth, so for the moment Herodotus lays aside his normally transparent and ebullient manner. Explicitly critical discussion of and judgment on his sources was in this area, as in some aspects of religion, completely out of place.

Finally, how did Herodotus select his material, and how far was he prepared to generalize on the strength of the selections he had made? Usually, the first part of this question ('how did he select . . .?') is unanswerable, because selection means leaving certain things out, and there are limits to what we can say about what is not there. If we had a full tradition *apart* from Herodotus, we would be in a better position to say 'he did not record event x or custom y' but that would not tell us whether he consciously omitted x or y unless we knew for certain that he was aware of x or y. Sometimes we can feel confident that when dealing with a particular complex of traditons, he has under-reported or rejected elements of which he was well aware. Thus his account or rather accounts of the the foundation by the Theran Battus of Cyrene in North Africa (4.145–59, a narrative which includes the story of Cyrene's mother-city Thera) both resemble, and diverge from, the material in Pindar's *Fourth* and *Ninth Pythian Odes*.[14] For example, the nymph Cyrene (for whom see Pindar *Ninth Pythian*) does not feature in Herodotus; she is not quite a foundress, as Malkin (1994) 173 rightly insists, but he agrees that she is extremely important as 'foreshadowing the "political" foundation/colonization by Battos'. Nor does Herodotus spell out the story of Battus' ancestor Euphemus the Argonaut, who was given a clod of earth by a son of Poseidon, to legitimate his possession of Cyrene (Pindar, *Fourth Pythian*). Herodotus does, however, plainly show his awareness of this story by his casual description of Battus as 'Euphemides', 'descendant of Euphemus' (4.150, part of the Theran version of events).

[14] Dougherty (1993) 136–56; Malkin (1994) 169–79; Giangiulio (2001).

Elsewhere, it is very hard to apply controls to Herodotus' accounts. Thucydides, as I have tried to show elsewhere (Hornblower (1996a) 129–34) is, in the *speeches* which he puts into his agents' mouths, dependent to a remarkable and almost exclusive degree on Herodotus for his 'ancient history' i.e., for events earlier than the Persian Wars. In his *narrative*, Thucydides is more willing to draw on non-Herodotean traditions, but even here there is conspicuous reluctance to move outside the Herodotean groove. A good example is the First Sacred War, allegedly fought in the early sixth century BC for possession of Delphi by a coalition of Greek powers; but not mentioned by Herodotus or (in effect) any source earlier than the fourth century BC. As a multi-state conflict, it would have been very relevant to Thucydides' initial discussion of wars earlier than the Peloponnesian (1.1–20, where he seeks to show that such wars were less great than the Peloponnesian). But he omits it, surely because Herodotus had also omitted it. By contrast, Thucydides includes the Lelantine War fought on Euboea but with international allies—because Herodotus did mention it (Thuc. 1.15; Hdt. 5.99). Before we can say whether Herodotus (or Thucydides) omitted the First Sacred War we need to be sure that the war was historical, and was not an invention of the age of Philip II of Macedon; Davies (1994b) 206 cautiously concludes that the historicity of the war is 'a plausible hypothesis, but no more'. If the war did happen, we have an example of a Herodotean omission not rectified except by some scrappy later evidence.

The reasons for such omissions are inscrutable, but one can make guesses: Apollo giving an oracle about the foundation of Cyrene was one thing, Apollo raping the nymph Cyrene was another, and so was the clod of earth given to Euphemus by the son of Poseidon. That is, Herodotus shrank from including direct as opposed to mediated intervention by a god. (On this topic see Harrison (2000b) 82–92, and cf. above p. 382). As for the First Sacred War, its absence from Herodotus is just a reminder that he was not writing a comprehensive history of archaic Greece (for the question of unevenness in Herodotus' coverage of events before the sixth century, a topic which cannot be discussed here, see the rather different perspectives of Murray (1987) and of Thomas (2001)).

Generalization and extrapolation in Herodotus there certainly is. Some of it is 'gnomic' in character, that is, it offers proverbially expressed summings-up of some facet of human experience. Gould ((1989) 81 f.) rightly insists that such remarks are generalizations only

in a special and partial sense: this sort of utterance does not 'require all subsequent experience to bear it out'. We can add that it is not particularly closely related to any 'source' except in the limited sense that the generalization in Herodotus may take the form of an endorsement of someone else's view, thus 'Pindar was right to say that "custom is king of all"' (3.38). Other generalizations, like that about the superiority of democracy to tyranny (5.78), look like expressions of political opinion masked as generalization. But some of the generalization is more specific and apparently source-derived.

Take three main city-states of old Greece, the Athenians, the Spartans, and the Corinthians. Each is the subject of a bold and celebrated generalizing judgment: the Athenians are the cleverest of the Greeks who are themselves cleverer than the barbarians (1.60), the Spartans value the things of the gods more than the things of men (5.63, surely a Herodotean or possibly an Athenian view, but not a Spartan one), and the Corinthians despise craftsmen less than do other Greeks (2.167). The second and third of these, at least, are much cited by students of Greek religion and Greek economics respectively, and it would be good to be sure that they have some inductive validity. But it is not easy to say whether these and similar generalizations are offered on the strength of accumulated testimony of his sources, the *communis opinio* of the *logioi* Greeks he had spoken to, and that he had spoken to enough Spartans and Corinthians (and to enough non-Spartans and non-Corinthians) to give weight to his judgments; or whether they merely represent his own prejudices, casually and impressionistically arrived at. The cleverness of the Athenians looks more straightforward at first sight: no long training in ancient Greek history is needed to show that there were plenty of clever fifth-century Athenians for Herodotus to talk to. But the generalization must be contextualized. It features in a story about an uncharacteristic piece of Athenian credulity as Herodotus saw it. And these same Athenians are elsewhere (5.97) used to support the paradox that it is easier to fool 30,000 people than one man, because King Cleomenes of Sparta refused help to Aristagoras the Ionian whereas the Athenian democracy granted it and so brought on itself the wrath of the Persian king. The relation of sources to generalization remains elusive. As Momigliano once famously said of Herodotus: 'the secrets of his workshop are not yet all out' ((1966) 130).

For instance, much more work needs to be done on Herodotus' relation to other types of contemporary literary and scientific activity;

thus it has recently been suggested that some of Herodotus' Scythian material has been passed through a 'Hippocratic filter'. That is, there is some sort of debt to contemporary medical inquiry (Thomas (2000) 60, a very guarded formulation). Something similar can be said (Thomas (2000) 162–200) about the language of proof in Herodotus, which shows clear analogies with non-historical writing of the period. But in all this it is very difficult (as Thomas' guarded use of the 'filter' metaphor shows) to know where it is proper to speak of Herodotus' 'use of [specific, possibly identifiable] sources of information' and at what point we should stop talking of 'sources' and talk instead of general occupancy of a shared intellectual milieu.[15] The same is true in many ways of Thucydides as well, but though there is a little ethnography in Thucydides, and though there is an interest in things medical on the part of a man who caught the great Plague but recovered from it (Thuc. 2.48.3), nevertheless Herodotus' cheerful march across the intellectual disciplines takes him across a wider territory and his footprints are that much harder to trace.

[15] See also Chs. 1 and 7, this volume.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

THE ORGANIZATION OF TIME IN THE *HISTORIES*

Justus Cobet

Introduction to the Subject

Rural societies experienced time as being set by nature. They observed her regular rhythm as the fig trees sprout, the swallows fly, and the planets show particular configurations.[1] The Egyptians, on the other hand, actively counted. 'They invented the year' (*exeurein ton eniauton*) and learned how to cope with the difference between the solar and the lunar year, to the effect that contrary to the Greeks 'their seasonal cycle comes round to the same point in their calendar each time'.[2] Ancient societies registered the sequence of time by kings' reigns, priesthoods, and magistracies. To measure longer spaces of time, they took a beginning as reference point, such as the exodus from Egypt, the founding of a dynasty, the first Olympics, or the founding of Rome. But a really absolute chronology, which transcended cultural frontiers or historical periods, came into existence only through the almost universal usage of the Christian era.

In nature, things appear to recur, but the individual experience of life and death teaches us that time is not reversible. Different historical times are experienced not only by individuals but also by groups and over a time span of several generations. Accordingly, the irreversible nature of time changes from a natural into a cultural experience of a given story or history, although such stories can be and have been interpreted as a natural cycle, for example, one of growing and decaying empires. Time measured in a frame of absolute chronology such as the secularized Christian era becomes a quantity abstracting from specific experiences, interpretations, and meaning. At the

[1] Hesiod, *W&D* 382; 567–8; 679–81.

[2] Both quotations Hdt. 2.4. Quotations without author will refer to Herodotus throughout this chapter. For *verbatim* quotations I use the English translation of Waterfield (1998).

same time, such a chronology enables us to connect various histories and cultural constructs of different groups and to combine them into a new and more general history. Any such construct will reveal its historian's specific historical perspective and the specific tradition she or he is working in, which yields the interesting topic of historical periodization (See Cobet (2000)).

Herodotus' work belongs to the beginning of this story. Perhaps comparable to the Old Testament, it created the model for an organization of time which transcends cultural boundaries. There was no absolute chronology on which he could build to present a coherent story consisting of disparate, causally unrelated events. Therefore, *legein ta legomena* 'to report what is told' (2.123) involves first of all the organization of time *within* a particular *logos*, as for example in the case of the Lydian kings. As W. den Boer put it: 'Wenn ihm eine Geschichte oder etwas anderes wichtig oder nützlich erschien, so übernahm er sie, zusammen mit dem chronologischen Rahmen, in den sie sein Gewährsmann gestellt hatte'.[3]

On this basis, Herodotus organized time and space as the basic dimensions in which historiography has to develop meaning. To arrange the heterogeneous material he encountered into a *continuum* of time was a practical question, but also a matter of interpretation: the construction of a particular historical temporal space that was meaningful to the readers he had in mind. He is so to speak the funnel through which heterogeneous traditions about different times and places change into another frame of perception, so that out of past and present, out of the complexities of historical times, a continuous time space is created that can rightly be called the history of the *Oikoumenē*.

Before the rise of historiography in Greek literature, there were two models to relate 'ancient history' to one's own time: Homer and Hesiod. In the *Iliad*, Helen speaks to Hector about her being guilty of the ongoing war. She concludes with a reference to the poem within the poem: the present events 'will become subject of song for future generations' (*opissō anthrōpoisi pelōmeth' aoidimoi essomenoisi*) *Il.* 6.357–8. 'The favourite illustration of this [i.e., a heroic age long since passed] is perhaps the poet's reference (*Il.* 12.447) to a hero's

[3] Den Boer (1967) 38. See also Dux (1989) 278: '. . . war auch die Chronologie nicht die Chronologie eines Weltgeschehens, sondern die des Handlungsfeldes, in dem die Ereignisse einem festgehaltenen Handlungslauf angegeliedert wurden'.

throwing a stone "which two men of today [*hoioi nun brotoi eis'*] could scarcely have lifted"' (Snodgrass (1971) 2). Before his duel with Aias, Hector proposes to the Achaeans that in case he is victorious a tumulus for his slain opponent be erected, to be seen by everybody who passes the Hellespont (*Il.* 7.67–91). 'And someone of the later born men' (*kai pote tis . . . opsigonōn anthrōpōn*), as he envisages, will 'some day' (*pote*) relate what happened, saying: 'This is the tomb of a man who died a long time ago' (*andros men tode sēma palai katatethnēōtos*, 7.87).[4] The poet separates the narrated time of the heroes from his own and his audience's by a distance that is not measured in temporal units.

The events of this 'ancient history' far away are not only present through the actual performance of the epic poems (see Bakker (1999b); (1999c)) but also through the visible evidence of the tumuli in the Troad and the ruins of Troy's walls, the very symbol of what the whole story is about.[5] Hesiod, endowed with the skill of the Muses, who know to tell 'about the past, the present, and the future' (*eirousai ta t' eonta ta t'essomena pro t'eonta, Th.* 38), speaks of five ages of the world (*W&D* 106–201). In this conception, the time of the Homeric heroes separates the golden, silver and bronze age from the present, iron age: a primeval condition of paradisiacal bliss has deteriorated in four steps to the misery of the empirical world.

Neither in Homer nor in Hesiod is there a continuum in time and history. The conception is rather one of layers of different quality, and if we call the most recent one 'history', defined by later authors as *spatium historicum*, there are different projections from it reaching into another state of things, called *spatium mythicum* by the same authors. In order to have access to both *spatia* of time, the poets had to invoke the Muses, 'who know everything, who are everywhere' (*pareste te iste te panta, Il.* 2.485).[6] Herodotus, by contrast, had to establish authority for his narrative in his own name, through

[4] See Bakker (1997b) 12: 'the idea of the past as something *near* and re-created in the context of the performance yet at the same time something *distant*', and, referring to *Il.* 7.87–91, 33: 'the future of an event, instead of being something inherent in that event, is the *kleos* of that event, its representation in the poetry of the future'. Cf. also Patzek (1992a) 162 f. and *passim*.

[5] Patzek (1992b). On the visibility of the Bronze Age walls in Homer's time, see Hertel (1991); Korfmann (1993) 19.

[6] See also Darbo-Peschanski (1987) 23–4.

his personal research into the continuum of the empirical world: *historiēs apodexis*.[7]

After Herodotus, Thucydides in his *Archaeology* (1.2–19) reconstructed all of 'ancient history' as a continuous development leading up to his proper subject, the Peloponnesian War, which took place in his own lifetime. 'Ancient history' became the immediate prehistory of the present. In this way, *spatium mythicum* and *spatium historicum* have been amalgamated into one continuous history (cf. Hunter (1982) 103–4). His narrative in the *Archaeology* is thoroughly Hellenocentric, to the point that scholars are in doubt about Thucydides' implicit pretension of the universal value of its content (Hunter (1982) 101). The obvious difference with Herodotus in how to construct a historical continuum is that the *Histories* integrate various historical subjects with their distinct histories. In this respect, Herodotus' work is more interesting and also produced the model for the future. Thucydides' narrative presupposes the material of Homer and Herodotus. The paradigmatic transition to history as a continuum of time happened in between Homer and Thucydides.[8]

Introduction to the Author

Mosshammer's study of 'The *Chronicle* of Eusebius' (1979) has Greek interest in historical chronology begin with Herodotus, whom he places in between genealogy as a simple method of relative chronology (e.g., Hecataeus and Pherecydes) and chronography (e.g., Hellanicus), which records 'historical events precisely dated by reference to an absolute chronological system'.[9] But Mosshammer rejects a simplistic evolutionary model: 'What we shall find, however, is not confirmation of the evolutionary hypothesis, which moves from genealogy to chronography. Instead, we shall find proof that Greek chronological tradition rests on a wonderful mixture of ingredients, no one of which can be distilled out without destroying the rest' (Mosshammer

[7] On this term and its significance for Herodotus' work, see Bakker, this volume (Ch. 1).

[8] For a narratological discussion of the temporal framework of the *Histories*, see de Jong, this volume, Ch. 11.

[9] Mosshammer (1979) 85. On Hecataeus *FGrH* 1 F 1–35, see Meyer (1892); on Pherecydes *FGrH* 3, see Ruschenbusch (1995), (1999), (2000); on Hellanicus *FGrH* 4 F 74–86, see Jacoby (1912) 114–27.

(1979) 105). Herodotus' narrative reflects the different 'historical times' inherent in the various cultural traditions he draws on. It is not the least part of his achievement to have constructed out of these a new continuum of space and time. Herodotus started the journey which Eusebius and Hieronymus completed.

The tradition of research in the field of Herodotus' organization of time started with Eduard Meyer's influential article 'Herodots Chronologie der Sagengeschichte' (1892). Meyer did not allow for any interest in chronology on Herodotus' part, either as regards the *spatium mythicum*, or, as he remarked in a later publication, as regards the *spatium historicum*.[10] As Walter Burkert ((1995) 144) remarks: 'What Eduard Meyer the historian overlooked was that the question is not about historical fact, but about traditions.' Meyer's negative judgment was followed for a long time, for example by How and Wells and Felix Jacoby's substantial article in *Pauly-Wissowa*'s supplement 2.[11] A thorough study on early Greek genealogical chronology was conducted by Prakken (1943). Prakken worked along the lines of Meyer but he reached the opposite conclusion that Herodotus 'had a definite system of chronology and that this system was founded on genealogical principles'.[12] Mitchel's (1956) examination of Herodotus' use of genealogical chronology, using but not appreciating Prakken, modified Meyer's judgment only slightly.[13] He makes an exception for the more recent past, but concludes for the remote past that, though it is a vague, misleading, arbitrary, and artificial method, counting by generations is the only way to arrange things. He clears up the terminological confusion by distinguishing between genealogy, mythography, mythical historiography, and genealogical chronology as part of historiography, all of these being genres that had developed in this order before Herodotus. As he sees this development mirrored in various examples in Herodotus, Mitchel ((1956) 60) states that on the whole Herodotus was 'not concerned with establishing a consistent chronology for the mythical history'.

[10] Meyer (1892) 185; Meyer (1937) 210 (Bouvier (2000) 123 n. 25 wrongly declares this reference of Strasburger (1956) 129 'fautive').

[11] How and Wells (1928) I: 437–42; Jacoby (1913) 484. Further references in Strasburger (1956) 129–31; (1962) 678–80. See also Fränkel (1960) 85–6; de Jong (1999) 233–5; Bichler and Rollinger (2000) 31–42.

[12] Prakken (1943) 18–48; quotation 47.

[13] I pass over the rather artificial 'marriage of historiography and arithmetic' of Miller (1965) 109.

Ernst Badian writes ((1996) 58 n. 7) that 'for study of the non-chronological nature of Herodotus' organization one need not look beyond John L. Myres' classic *Herodotus, Father of History*, 1953 ch. V'.[14] Badian's is the most recent statement on our subject I know of. It does not take notice, however, of Strasburger's thorough investigation of the chronological grid behind the *spatium historicum* in the *Histories*. Under the unpretentious title 'Herodots Zeitrechnung', his account appeared in the same year as Mitchel's 'genealogical chronology,' and referred to a late positive statement of Jacoby's ((1949) 382 n. 10): 'Herodotos' interest in chronology is obvious in all parts of his work, not for mythical times only, but for historical times, for which he gives epochs and dates of reigns for the kings. If he gives only isolated dates for Greek events that cannot be dated by Persian or Lydian kings, the only possible inference is that he had no more to give.' Strasburger ((1956) 132; (1962): 682) concluded: 'Er ist ja doch der Erste, der Mann, der [. . .] aus dem Chaos von Greisengeschwätz den Kosmos der Geschichte geschaffen hat'.

This conclusion was contested by den Boer (1967), although the controversy he raises seems to be primarily a matter of terminology. If we take den Boer's terms strictly, even our Christian era would not qualify for what he calls 'absolute chronology' (den Boer (1967) 30–5). Den Boer offers a positive assessment of the method of genealogical chronology (which he considers nevertheless imprecise), but stresses the inconsistencies in Herodotus' account that are due to his sources (e.g., royal lists), whose synchronisms he failed to harmonize. His conclusion is that Herodotus did the best he could do: 'Sein ordnender Geist hat die ihm zur Verfügung stehenden mangelhaften Mittel in überzeugender Art und Weise benutzt.'[15] Kurt von Fritz, in his *Griechische Geschichtsschreibung*, dedicates a long chapter to the subject along the lines of Strasburger,[16] and A. B. Lloyd's assessment explicitly rejects den Boer's intervention: 'There can, in fact, be no doubt that when he set himself down to write the work which we know he had developed a coherent and systematic scheme

[14] Myres actually neither inquires into the topic nor advances an opinion on it. Lateiner (1989) 114 starts his chapter on chronology as follows: 'Chronological order provides the obvious principle of organization for most historians, but not for Herodotus.' Cf. Darbo-Peschanski (1987) 30–2.

[15] Den Boer (1967) 49; see also Prakken (1943).

[16] Von Fritz (1967) 364–406 (text); 2, 173–99 (notes).

to serve as the framework for his monumental study' (Lloyd (1975) 171; 172 n. 4).

To me it is not as compelling as it is to Lloyd to infer that Herodotus constructed 'a grid on which to base his historical narrative *before* even beginning the serious composition of his work'.[17] But there seems to be a general consensus to follow Strasburger in assuming that Herodotus knew what he was doing when he tried to coordinate the dates he could collect in connection with his narrative material. The intention of the present chapter is to analyse and to interpret Herodotus' overall organization of time without separating the mythical and the historical sections of the *Histories*.[18] In order to facilitate the exposition of the subject, I offer an abstract grid which integrates the more overt indications of time Herodotus gives in the course of his narrative. Anticipating my analysis, I explain the hierarchy of criteria I used in constructing this grid. I am well aware of the fact that various intervals in time do not correspond with each other very well; but the grid helps to see that too. The grid is based on the following indications of time:

1. absolute figures indicating intervals: 1.1 *es eme*, to Herodotus' lifetime; 1.2 of regnal years, adding up to the time span of a particular dynasty.
2. intervals of time measured by counting generations: 2.1 as a mere indication of their number; 2.2 as a list of names.
3. synchronisms: 3.1 between specific historical events; 3.2 between actors; 3.3 between generations.

There also are some harmonizing compromises between these criteria to be detected. It may not be by chance that the grid I finally arrived at somewhat resembles what Helm reconstructed for Eusebius.[19]

[17] Lloyd (1975) 194; on a possible distinction between Herodotus' gathering of knowledge and the actual composition of the *Histories*, see Rösler, this volume (Ch. 4).

[18] Cf. Burkert (1985) 15: 'Herodot als Historiker von Traditionen, nicht als Ausgräber von Fakten zu verstehen, ist eine Aufgabe, an der Historiker wie Philologen noch zu arbeiten haben.'

[19] Helm (1984). A first version is offered in Cobet (1999) 604–5; see also Asheri (1988) CXII f. Helpful genealogical tabulations in Ruschenbusch (1995); D. Feil in Bichler (2000) 403–6.

Pan
Heracles 17000
Dionysus 15000
Min 11000
PHOENICIANS
Tyre founded
2750
2300
Cadmus
Polydorus, Semele
Labdacus Dionysus
Laius
Oedipus
Eteocles
Laodamas
TROY
Mycerinus
Nyctimus
Pherus
Proteus 10+
Rhampsinitus
Cheops 50
Chephren 56
Mycerinus 63+
Asychis
Anysis
Sabacus 50
341g
Sethus
Thirty-five kings
670 Psammetichus 54
616 Necho 16
600 Psammis 6
594 Apries 25
569 Amasis 44
Polycrates
ca.535 Psammenitus ½
Amyrtaeus
3458
350g
Agron
Ardys 49 679
Sadyates 12 630
Alyattes 57 618
Croesus 14 561
Sardes taken ca. 547
Candaules
Gyges 38 717
Phrygians
Cimmerians
Scyths 28
Antyages
Pharaortes
Déioces
Phraortes
Cyaxares
Astyages
Perseus, Andromeda
Perses
Achaemenes
Teispes
Cambyses
Cyrus
Teispes
Cyrus
Cambyses
Darius
Xerxes 480
Artaxerxes
Alcaeus
Belus
Ninus
Cephcus
21 gen. to Darcios 320
6.98
Semiramis
Nitocris, Labynetus
Labyn.: Bab.conquered
Cambyses
Smerdis
Darius
Calliades archon 8.51
Polyneices
Thersandrus
Tisamenus
Autesion
Theras
Oeolykus
Aigeus
Acsanius
Grinnus
Battus
Arcesilaus
Battus
Arcesilaus
Arcesilaus
Hillus
Cleodaeus
Aristomachus
Aristodemus: return of the Heraclidae
Eurysthenes, Procles
Agis, Eurypbon
Echestratus, Pryanis: Lycurgus
Leobotes, Polydectes
Doryssus, Eunomus
Hegesilaus, Charilaus
Archelaus, Nicandrus
Teleclus, Theopompus
Alcmenes, Anaxandrides
Polydorus, Archidamus
Eurycrates, Anaxilaus
Anaxandrus, Leotychides
Eurycratides, Hippocratides
Leon, Hegesilaus/-cles
Anaxandridas, Ariston
Cleomenes, Dorieus
Leonidas, Leotychides
Pausanias, Zeuxidamus
Pleistarchus
[Pleistoanax.]
Archidamus
Eurystheus
Atreus
Sarpedon, Minos Pandion
Lycus, Aegeus
Thera,
CYRENE
SPARTA
Pelops 7.171
Europa
Menelaus, Helena Penelope
Orestes Pan
Alcmene
Heracles
Hyllus
Aegeus
Pericles
Themistokles
Cleisthenes
P.'s sons
Peisistratus
Hegesistratus
Miltiades
CRETE
ATHENS
THEBES
IONIA
Herodotus 7.137 1430; 9.73
2.13-14;33;145
500 Hecataeus 5.36
Thrasybulus
Thales
EGYPT
LYDIA
MEDES
PERSIANS
ASSYRIA
BABYLON
1.6-26;86
1.96-130
1.214 etc. 7.11
1.95;102;106;184
1.174;184-188
4.147-167
7.204;8.131
1.173 etc.
1.59 etc.
5.58-61 etc.
16.8 etc.
2.33;99-161;3.10-14;

Defining the Extension of Time

In his first sentence, Herodotus announces a specific topic, the Persian Wars, which happened within his parents' lifetime. In an unspecific way this event is embedded in a large open space of time, in which everything can happen, as he once says explicitly (5.9.3).[20] In the same general way, Greeks as well as barbarians, in fact all the inhabitants of the *Oikoumenē*, are the general subject of reference in the *Histories*.

Herodotus starts off his specific topic with an artificial construction, which distils from traditional Greek myths an argument about war guilt (1.1–5). This argument organizes time within the *spatium mythicum* through a significant chain of events. The turning point is the Trojan War, interpreted as an overreaction of the Greeks to the abduction of women by the barbarians. The chain of abductions is a model of how to create new meaning by arranging different stories in a specific order of time. Yet he quotes it merely as a version of the prehistory of the Persian Wars, only to put it aside in favour of making a start with the Lydian King Croesus (1.5 f.).

Only starting from Croesus does Herodotus begin to organize the threads of his narrative and to count the years. For Herodotus, Croesus is an empirically well-documented point of departure, both temporally and in terms of the meaningful historical process which leads up to the only anchor date he offers at a particularly significant moment in the course of the events he wants to save from oblivion. The moment Xerxes took and destroyed Athens is the turning point of the story, which is designated with the remark that 'Calliades was *Arkhōn* in Athens' (and qualified by the indication that it happened 'three months after he had crossed the Hellespont': the symbol of Persian *hubris* in crossing over from Asia to Europe (8.51)). As Strasburger noted, every Greek could convert this date without further ado to his own time reckoning.[21] The Athenocentric chronology is emphasized later on with Herodotus' remark that Athens had been captured for a second time 'nine months later' (*dekamēnos egeneto*, 9.3).

[20] γένοιτο δ' ἂν πᾶν ἐν τῷ μακρῷ χρόνῳ (the Sigynnae may derive from the Medes). Cf. the notion of 'the whole time': 9.27 ἐν τῷ παντὶ χρόνῳ; 9.73 ἐς τὸν πάντα χρόνον. Cf. Soph. Phil. 236: πολλὰ γὰρ τάδε ἐν τῷ μακρῷ χρόνῳ γένοιτ' ἂν ἀνδρώπων χρόνῳ. See de Romilly (1971a) 87.

[21] Strasburger (1956) 136 (= (1962) 688): 'Jeder Grieche konnte dieses Datum ohne weiteres in seine Zeitrechnung umsetzen.' The harsh criticism of den Boer

Thucydides would later do the same thing, not, as Herodotus did, towards the end of the historical process he studied,[22] but at its very beginning, because he analysed the war, as he pretended (1.1), from its outset. In meticulously synchronizing the *Arkhōn* of Athens with the priestess of Hera at Argos and the Spartan *Ephorus* (Thuc. 2.2), he did it in a more elaborate way. Speaking of the Athenian archon list first published in the 420s, Mosshammer ((1979) 91 f.) points out that 'The publication of such a list made historical chronology possible, while the scene of history that Herodotus had brought to the Greek world made such work desirable.'

The expansion, first of Croesus' empire, and subsequently that of the Persian kings, is interpreted as a meaningfully coherent process. It provides a context for events, and so creates historical time. As this process proceeds, it begins to function as an abstract frame, in connecting a great many different stories, each of which contains in a specific way its intrinsic economy of time. On the whole, Herodotus' text gives the impression of having systematically paced and measured 'the large space of time' (5.9.3). Its dimensions reach back far beyond the 345 generations since the time of the first human king in Egypt (2.143) and to the time, 17,000 years ago, when the gods around the Egyptian Heracles mingled as kings with men (2.43; 144 f.). The rhythm of nature differs from the rhythm of history. In the long interval of 11,340 years between the kings Min and Sethos, the sun, as Herodotus reports, changed direction four times. But 'nothing in Egypt was altered at these times—nothing growing in the earth or living in the river was any different, and there was no change in the course of diseases or in the ways people died' (2.142). In another context Herodotus nevertheless reckons with a history of nature. He empirically confirms the notion that the river Nile had built up the delta 'only recently' (*neōsti hōs logōi eipein*); man had followed up north along with the growing land (2.15). Herodotus does not speculate about the origins of man, and there is, of course, no

(1967) 32 f.) is mere word play; his own interpretation, it seems to me, concurs with what Strasburger wants to say: 'Das Invasionsjahr wurde in der mündlichen Tradition als 'das Jahr des Kalliades' bezeichnet.' Vannicelli (1993) 10–13 is in agreement with Strasburger.

[22] Lloyd (1975) 183 f. interprets this as the only weak point of Herodotus' organization of time; even more so Hunter (1982) 332. But compare Solon at 1.32.9: 'With everything you have to look at how it comes to an end' *σκοπέειν δὲ χρὴ παντὸς χρήματος τὴν τελευτὴν κῇ ἀποβήσεται.*

myth of creation to be found in his work. It is only in passing that he mentions that at some time men have had to come into existence.[23] The idea that they always have been there prevails. Herodotus' continuum of time includes the gods.[24]

Horizons of Memory and Beyond

'When working, as Herodotus worked, with neither an era nor reliable documents, one must obviously begin with his own time and work backwards. The closer to the present, the greater the completeness and accuracy of the account' (Mitchel (1956) 48). Thucydides looks back briefly to 'ancient history' and in somewhat more detail to the recent past, but he wrote about the present, progressing as things happened, being eyewitness himself and inquiring with his contemporaries (1.22). Herodotus wrote on the recent past and on events further back, beyond the confines of his personal memory. He could inquire personally into the memory of those who lived in the generations of his parents and grandparents, but beyond that horizon he depended on other cultural techniques to preserve or to imagine some memory of the past.

'Up to my own time' (*es eme*) is in various contextual functions the most common way in which Herodotus talks about some point in the past with respect to his own and his audience's present; the expression constitutes so to speak the chronological base line of the *Histories*.[25] 'Even now' (*alla kai nun*) many Ionians are ashamed of their name remembering their subjection by Cyrus (1.143); Xerxes in 480 BC could not subjugate the Thracian tribe of the Satrae (7.111): they are 'still free until my time' (*to mekhri emeu aiei eontes eleutheroi*); King Amasis of Egypt installed a law to enforce the declaration of yearly income which Solon introduced to Athens, where it is 'still in use' (*tōi ekeinoi es aiei khreōntai*, 2.177).

The interval between his topic, the Persian Wars, and his own lifetime, is most clearly expressed within the context of Xerxes'

[23] *ἐξ οὗ ἀνβρώπων γένος ἐγένετο*, 2.15.

[24] Against Darbo-Peschanski (1987) 25–38.

[25] Powell (1938) 146 quotes this or the like expression 32 times. More than fifty references of this type in Schmid and Staehlin (1934) 590 n. 9; cf. Cobet (1971) 53 f.; 59 f.; Rösler, this volume (Ch. 4), 91–92.

approaching the Greek heartland (7.137 f.). Asking about the final retaliation for the sacrilege of killing Persian envoys in Sparta in 490 BC (6.48), Herodotus finds the answer in the death of their sons Sperthias and Boulis, who had offered satisfaction to Xerxes: this happened 'much later' (*khronōi de metepeita pollōi*), at the time of the war between the Peloponnesians and the Athenians' (7.137.1). But only with the help of Thucydides are we able to call it the year 430 BC (Thuc. 2.67). In other words, the time at which Herodotus was working on the *Histories* and the present of his immediate audience is not related to the time of his main theme in any more precise way than by the distance of that one generation. Consequently, 'up to my own time' refers to the personal memory of his own generation of, say, the 450s to the early 420s.[26]

Beginning with the Ionian revolt of 499 BC, half way through the *Histories* (at 5.28 ff.), Herodotus relates in close sequence, arranging events almost year by year, in the end even counting months and days, from the destruction of Miletus and the Persian defeat at Marathon up to Salamis 480 BC (with the 'anchor date' 8.51) and Plataea 479 BC.[27] Greek and oriental history are in close interaction, and so there is need for explicit synchronization only in a few cases, for example to connect the western Greeks with the main events (7.166). Of course, both sides do not remember the same story, and Herodotus takes care to arrange his narrative in such a way as to keep this difference in the reader's mind. Of course, he adopts the Greek perspective, as he opposes the Persian king to Demaratus the Spartan in conversation (7.101–5; 209), or Greek and Persian aristocrats at the *symposium* of Attaginus (9.15 f.). A participant in the latter event was one of Herodotus' informants. The Persian (and Phoenician) interpretation of the Persian-Greek conflict which he had presented in the introductory chapters (1.1–5) may derive from a similar social situation.

Knowledge through personal testimony reaches back three generations, a distance which Herodotus equates with one hundred years (2.142), 'il suo campo storico' (Vannicelli), Bichler's and Rollinger's

[26] The date of his *akmē* (444 BC) is deduced from Apollodorus *FGrH* 244 F 7; see also Jacoby (1913) 230.

[27] Strasburger (1956) 151–6; (1962) 710–17. Cf. Bouvier (2000) 123 f.; 131. It is on the level of the smaller units of time that Bouvier inquires into Herodotus' 'procedures de connexion' between 'le temps cosmique' and 'le temps discursif'.

'Erzählzeit' from Croesus to Xerxes, or simply 'the recent past' (Vansina).[28] He consulted Archias, son of Samius, grandson of Archias, about the expedition of Sparta against Samos of *c.* 525 BC,[29] during which the grandfather fought at Samos with great bravery (3.55).[30] In Athens Herodotus may have talked to Zopyrus, son of Megabyzus, son of Zopyrus, who had played an important role in Darius' reconquest of Babylon in 521 BC. His son Megabyzus came to Greece with Xerxes in 480 BC (7.82; 121) and fought against the Athenians in Egypt about 455 BC, but the grandson joined the Athenians towards 440 BC (3.160).[31] The recapturing of Babylon at the beginning of Darius' reign is synchronized with the end of Polycrates of Samos.[32]

Since the pluriform nature of Greek oral tradition, with its focus on aristocratic families and disparate *poleis*, does not allow for any grid of chronology even within the three generations' span of time,[33] orientation has to come from the oriental kingdoms:[34] 'The tales of the Greeks are many and absurd', that is, contradictory.[35] Further back in time, beyond the reconquest of Babylon of 521 BC, one reaches the destruction of Sardes of *c.* 547 BC, a date that is not exactly fixed within the reign of Cyrus, but that can be extrapolated fairly plausibly from various synchronisms in the *Histories*.[36] It is certainly a major chronological orientation point in his narrative, and also probably the earliest one within the horizon of orally transmitted memory available to Herodotus. Xenophanes of Colophon, who lived up to the generation of our author's parents, took this event as a particular point of reference in the memory of his peers: 'In winter, at the fire place, small talk may begin with the question:

[28] Vannicelli (1993) 14 f.; Bichler and Rollinger (2000) 31 f.; Vansina (1985) 23 f.; 168f. Cf. Schott (1968); Thomas (1989) 108–23; 186; Ruschenbusch (1992).

[29] According to Herodotus at the same time as Cambyses' campaign against Egypt (3.44) and not a long time before Polycrates' death (3.120–5).

[30] Herodotus rarely gave the name of a personal informant he talked to: 2.55; 4.76; 9.16.

[31] How and Wells (1928) *ad loc.*

[32] Hdt. 3.150; cf. 140; 133; 127; 126; 120.

[33] Thomas (1989) 108–23; 155–95.; Raaflaub (1988a); Cobet (1988a). Bouvier (2000) 120–2.

[34] Strasburger (1956) 134 f.; 151; (1962) 686; 710 f.

[35] Hacataeus, *FGrH* 1 F 1; Thomas (1989) 183.

[36] Strasburger (1962) 684 n. 27; 693. The external confirmation of 547 BC by the chronicle of Nabonid unfortunately depends on a conjecture: Rollinger (1993) excursus 1; Cobet (1997) 259 n. 104.

"Where do you come from? Tell me your age. How old were you when the Mede came (*pēlikos ēsth' hoth' ho Mēdos aphiketo*)?"'[37] With Peisistratus of Athens gaining tyranny for the first time around 560 BC (1.59–65), we are obviously at the very edge of the oral horizon (Ruschenbusch (1992)), because we cannot unequivocally insert into his time grid the thirty-six years of his and his sons' tyranny of which Herodotus speaks (5.67).[38] Beyond this horizon there are the synchronisms between Croesus and the wise men Solon (1.29–33), Thales (1.75), Pittacus (1.27), and Bias (*ibid.*).[39] There is Cylon 'before the time of Peisistratus' (5.71), but no Draco.

Beyond the three generations' threshold around the middle of the sixth century BC there is another horizon of more or less coherent tradition not depending on personal memories but on some kind of written sources. It is represented by the dynastic sequence of the Lydians, the Medes, and the Persians (rather than of the Assyrians and Babylonians),[40] and of the Saitic kings in Egypt: Manetho's 26th dynasty, back to around 700 BC.

> Das chronologische Rückgrat des gesamten Werkes, bzw. der Teile, die literarisch als Haupterzählung zu betrachten sind, bildet also die Reihe der medisch-persischen Könige mit ihren lückenlos verzeichneten Regierungslängen, vor welche für die Zeit vor Kyros die ungefähr gleichzeitige Reihe der lydischen Herrscher kompositionell vorgelagert wird, weil die lydische Geschichte, im Gegensatz zu der medischen, zahlreiche Berührungspunkte mit der griechischen Geschichte aufweist und damit zugleich eine Reihe loser Einzelzüge aus letzterer zeitlich einzuordnen erlaubte.[41]

This horizon reaches in fact back to the time of Homer and Hesiod, but this was unknown to Herodotus and the Greeks, who put them beyond that line (2.53). They were unable to synchronize their early archaic period with the oriental kings with any precision, though around 600 BC the brother of Alcaeus went to Mesopotamia (Alc.

[37] Xenophanes fr. 18 Diehl = 22 D–K; cf. Drews (1973) 7.
[38] Strasburger (1962) 693 n. 36; Den Boer (1967) 57 f.
[39] Fehling (1985) 78–104.
[40] The epoch-making destruction of (Assur and) Nineveh about 612 BC is mentioned and can be attributed to the time of the Mede Cyaxares (1.103; 106). Herodotus does not keep his promise to tell more about it (1.106; 184, see also Bakker, this volume, Ch. 1, n. 25 and Rösler, Ch. 4, n. 17). Cf. Phocylides fr. 4 Diehl; the prophet Nahum in the Old Testament.
[41] Strasburger (1956) 150; (1962) 710 f. Cf. Drews (1969); Burkert (1995) 140 f.

fr. 50 Diehl = 350 L–P), and Greek mercenaries under Psammetichus fought in Egypt (Hdt. 2.154; *Syll.*[3] 1). The earlier generations of the older tyranny in Greece are notoriously difficult to reconcile with chronology. The oriental dynasties are connected with each other at least through the Persian expansion as they are all incorporated into the Persian empire at various dates. Nevertheless, none of those can be securely attributed to a certain year on the basis of Herodotus' narrative alone,[42] and the date of the battle of May 28, 585 BC between the Lydians and the Medes in Herodotus' time grid does not match the dates of both kings in question (1.74; 103).[43]

Beyond 700 BC, there are genealogical constructions—and of course there is Egypt, with its additional, now rather episodical row of kings which stretches back to Moeris, which is followed by speculations involving fantastic figures leading back to an undefined beginning.[44] These are dimensions which Hecataeus and the Greeks could hardly imagine (2.143). The Phoenicians, who founded Tyre 2,300 years before Herodotus, occupy an intermediate position (2.44). Within Egyptian temporal dimensions he remarks that the Delta had come into existence 'just recently' (*neōsti* 2.15), which translates into twenty or rather ten thousand years (2.11). In Greek dimensions he speaks of *neôsti* about Cadmus, his earliest point of reference for Greek genealogical constructions (2.49). Homer and Hesiod lived, as he guessed, no more than four hundred years ago, which is like 'only yesterday or the day before so to speak' (*prōēn te kai khthes hōs eipein logōi*, 2.53). With the Egyptians Herodotus could make up his mind about definitions of time and history.[45] 'Of all men I happened to come across they exercise memory most and have the most to tell' (*mnēmēn anthrōpōn pantōn epaskeontes malista logiōtatoi eisi makrōi tōn egō es diapeiran apikomēn*, 2.77). Throughout Book Two, Herodotus reports on architecture and monuments which bear testimony to an ancient culture. The Egyptians invented the calender to measure the rhythm of the years (2.4). What Herodotus systematizes as the progress in time, to be sure, involves construction, rather than memory. The

[42] It is a matter of taste to admire how much Herodotus' time grid is in agreement with modern reconstruction (Strasburger) or to stress its inconsistencies (den Boer).

[43] Den Boer (1967) 42; 52 f.

[44] Lloyd (1975) 185–94 and commentary (1976); Brown (1962) 260–3.

[45] Cobet (1971) 127–37; Hunter (1982) 50–92.

whole scheme nevertheless explores time as the comprehensive space of history. Its beginning is undetermined beyond seventeen thousand years (2.145). At its other end it runs into the grid of oriental dynasties.

The quality of Herodotus' scheme as a statement about Egyptian history is moulded by his informants. It primarily involves the organization of time. This has been effected by characteristically distinct means. The sequence of its sections mirrors a difference in knowledge, a difference in the quality of memory and traditions as they congealed somewhere on the way between, say, Egyptian priests and inquiring Ionians. The Saite dynasty is plausibly described as a realistic sequence (2.151–3.15).[46] To Herodotus this is due to the knowledge of the Greeks in Egypt (1.147; 154). Going back in time, the section from Sethos to Moeris, attributed to Egyptian priests (2.142), is no longer a dynastic sequence. It includes fragments of different dynasties and bridges time through abstract arithmetics, that is, genealogy without names (2.142). This is even more true of the adjacent section, which does not provide any name besides the cornerstones Moeris and Min (2.99–101). Min stands at the beginning of the human race (*anthrōpōn geneas*, 2.142). He is supposed to have been the first human being to become king of Egypt (*basileusai de prōton Aiguptou anthrōpon elegon Mina*, 2.4). Before Min, the kings were gods, but there were Egyptians already, who 'existed as long as man existed' (*aiei te einai ex hou anthrōpōn genos egeneto*, 2.15), and there is a continuum in time and even a rhythm of three sequences of gods (2.144 f.). Herodotus inquired about beginnings with the priests in Heliopolis, who are supposed to be 'the most knowledgeable in *logoi*, things to tell' (*logiōtatoi*, 2.3). But as far as things divine are concerned, Herodotus would not write down what he heard, because 'all men are equal in not knowing about such things' (*nomizōn pantas anthrōpous ison peri autōn* [sc. *ta theia*] *epístasthai*, 2.3).

Ethnē and Historical Time

With *ethnē*, tribes or nations, as described by Herodotus in the *Histories*, the status of historical time is very different from that of empires,

[46] In essence it accords to what we now know from Egyptian sources: Lloyd (1975) 191–3.

dynasties, or Greek cities. The Scythians are introduced as the youngest of all nations, the opposite of the Egyptians (4.5). The Scythians extended in space as the Egyptians extended in time. The way in which they use the vast open spaces, which are structured by an elaborate system of rivers is even thought to be to their credit (4.46 f.). *Ethnē* have no history and time makes no difference for their culture and way of life. This seems to be also true for the Massagetae (1.201–4; 215 f.), the Aethiopians (3.17–24), the Indians (3.98–105) as well as for the Libyans, who are the subject of an extended *logos* (4.168–99); even the Psyllians are part of the tableau, though they had had their time and in that sense are history (4.173). There are other splinters of history: for example, the Libyans are part of history through Greek colonization (4.178 f.), and the tribe of the Maxyes because they were immigrants from Troy (4.191).

Such contacts with 'history' are especially relevant in the case of the Thracians, who in spite of their static ethnology (5.3–10; 16) lived close to the scene of the Persian Wars and their antecedents (Asheri (1990)). They had been the object of the expedition of the Egyptian king Sesostris, who can be found in the time grid two generations before the Trojan War (2.103). Explicitly 'before the Trojan War' (*pro tōn Trōikōn genomenon*, 7.20) is Herodotus' date for the deportation of some Thracians to Bithynia (7.20; 75). The same has to be assumed for the immigration of Thracian Paeonians from the Troas to the Strymon (5.13).[47] The immigration of the Thracian Sigynnae has to be dated within the horizon of Herodotus' oriental dynasties, say, to the generations of Phraortes, Cyaxares, and Astyages, though our author confesses to having no idea about the circumstances or the date. In connection with this detail, he quotes what sounds like a proverb: 'In the long span of time everything may happen' (5.9.3). The Paeonians conquered Perinthus some time 'before' Darius' Scythian and Megabazus' Thracian expedition (*ta men proteron genomena . . . tote de . . .*, 5.1 f.). Some tribes of the Paeonians were deported to Asia Minor by Megabazus not long after his Thracian expedition, as can be deduced from the narrative sequence (5.12–15; 23; 98). There are several Thracian involvements with Athenian and Persian politics in the decades before Marathon (6.33–41), and some more events directly connected with Xerxes' expedition of 480 BC

[47] Asheri (1990) 153 f.: to be connected with *Il.* 2.844 f.

(e.g., 7.75; 110, see Asheri (1990) 156 ff.). Finally, in a few instances Herodotus mentions incidents belonging to the time after the Persian Wars, but he gives no exact dates. Expressions like 'later' (9.75) or 'many years later' (4.78) do not refer, say, to 480 BC but to the respective context. The sons of the Spartans Sperthias and Bulis were seized by the Thracian King Sitalces to be delivered to the Athenians 'much later [sc. than Xerxes' expedition], in the time of the war between the Peloponnesians and the Athenians' (7.137). Several of the earlier Thracian involvements in history like Sesostris' expedition are related to Herodotus' theme of Asia versus Europe.[48] There are also indications of another major subject: *ethnos* versus empire. With certain Paeonians (5.16) and with the Satrae (7.110 f.) the cultural innocence of primitive life is a strength the Persian empire could not cope with. In this case the two sides function within different notions of time.

If *ethnē* have a history of their own at all, it is stories about beginnings. There are two stereotypes which explain why people came to be where they lived. Either they have always been there as 'autochthons', *'Ureinwohner'*, or they came there a long time ago. Both possibilities are considered with the Carians, Caunians, and Lycians (1.171–3). Herodotus summarizes the Lybian *logos* as follows: Two nations, the Greeks and the Phoenicians, came to Lybia as immigrants, but the Libyans and Aethiopians were 'aborigines' (4.197). In the case of the Scythians, more space is given to beginnings. Herodotus gives three versions. The Scythian version builds on autochthony (4.5–7). The first man in the still uninhabited country was born from Zeus and a daughter of the River Borysthenes. The Scythians, assuming that they are the youngest of all people, imagine that this happened one thousand years before Darius' expedition. According to the Greek version, it started with Scythes born from a maid half snake, living in the empty country in a cave, who joined in love with Heracles (4.8–10). This makes the Scythians still a few generations younger, as appears from the time grid. Herodotus himself prefers to have them immigrated from Asia (4.11–13). 'Long ago' (*to palaion*) the country had been inhabited by the Cimmerians, who for their part left the country empty when they emigrated to Asia, where they are mentioned in connection with the time of the

[48] Asheri (1990) 151 ff.; 162.

Lydian King Ardys (1.6; 15), Cyaxares, king of the Medes, and the Egyptian Psammetichus (1.103; 4.1; 7.20), a time span of two generations (Harmatta (1990)).

With the *ethnē*, space, time, and meaning converge into a special junction. Often the *ethnē* are integrated into Herodotus' continuum of time and space by contingency. The culture of 'alterité' (Hartog 1980) is studied alongside the course by which the *histoire événementielle* accompanies the reader through time and space, that is, the Lydian and Persian expansion. *Ethnē*, which are 'primitive' in the sense of living close to nature, and which certainly do not form an empire, constitute in Herodotus' narrative a fundamental antithesis to imperial government: 'Otherness' creates a special meaning in the *Histories* in connection with the Persian expansion. The Persian king is not a 'just man (*anēr dikaios*), otherwise he would not long for land belonging to someone else', as Herodotus has the Aethiopian king respond to the Persian envoys (3.21). His narrative explains the Persian failures particularly in connection with the conflicts with the Massagetae (Cyrus), Aethiopians (Cambyses), Scythians (Darius)—and the Greeks, who also are happy with their freedom though living in a poor country (7.102).[49] In the encounter of *ethnē* with history, two different modi of historical time are confronted with each other. In order for the Greeks to be excluded from this interpretation, the 'primitive' *ethnē* in this notion fill out space rather than time. This opposition reminds us of Homer's Cyclopean society (*Od.* 9.105–15) and exemplifies 'the coexistence of different times'.[50] This notion is part of Herodotus'concept of 'historical time'.

Spatium Historicum, Spatium Mythicum, *and the Floating Gap*

Strasburger (1956) confined his investigation to the oriental dynasties. He explicitly excluded 'Sagenchronologie' as the *spatium mythicum*, set aside by Herodotus' 'Abschiedsgeste an den Mythos'. This was

[49] Cobet (1971) 101 ff.; 107–20.

[50] 'Gleichzeitigkeit des Ungleichzeitigen': Koselleck (1979) 222 f.; 32 ff. Cf. Kracauer (1973) 166 ff. *Locus classicus* is Thucydides' Archaeology (1.6): 'It could be shown by many examples, how the Greeks of old lived the same customs as the barbarians today.' Cf. John Locke, *Two treatises of government* (1690) II: 5. Of property § 49: 'Thus in the beginning all the world was America [. . .]; for no such thing as money was anywhere known.'

his interpretation of the phrase separating the sequence of mythical abductions of women from the definite starting point of the historical narrative, Croesus' rise to power (1.5f.).[51] This accords to the conventional working definition of the ancient writers communicated by Censorinus, based on the experience of a specific *historia perpetua*, of which Herodotus is only the beginning:

> And if the origin of the world had come to the knowledge of man, we would take the outset from there. But now I will treat that span of time (*intervallum temporis*), which Varro called *historical* (ἱστορικόν). He transmits that there are three distinctive times (*tria discrimina temporum*): 1) from the first men to the first flood, which because of ignorance is called *imperceptible* (ἄδηλον); 2) from the first flood to the first Olympics, which, because much in it is related fabulously (*quia multa in eo fabulosa referuntur*), is named *mythical* (μυθικόν); 3) from the first Olympics to our time (*ad nos*), which is denominated *historical* (ἱστορικόν), because it contains events and deeds based on real histories (*quia res in eo gestae veris historiis continentur*).[52]

This is a periodization, which implies in principle a continuity of history. The criterion on which different periods of historical time are distinguished is knowledge, as is also true for Herodotus (von Leyden (1949/50) 94–6).

At first sight, Herodotus' *spatium historicum* is the horizon of the oriental dynasties, at least as far as Egyptian history is concerned. Because of the contacts between the Ionians and Carians (whom King Psammetichus had called to settle in Egypt) on the one hand and the Greeks on the other, 'we know everything that happened in Egypt from the time of King Psammetichus onwards with certainty' (*atrekeōs*, 2.154). The section on older Egyptian history is set apart from the Saitic dynasty because of the use of other informants (i.e., the Egyptian priests: 2.142) and by general considerations on the dimensions of time in history (2.142–6). But not only is continuity of history the point he obviously intends to clarify, but he even refers to written sources which attest the 330 Egyptian kings starting with Min (2.100).[53]

> Der Mythos wird nicht von innen heraus kritisiert, sondern ihm eine andere Tradition entgegengesetzt; und indem die reale Kenntnis der

[51] Strasburger (1956) 134; (1962) 685 f.; (1982) 841 f.; 871 f.; 913.
[52] Censorinus, *De die natali* 21.1 (ed. Sallmann).
[53] Hunter (1982) 63 f.; Hampl (1979) 116–22.

> Vergangenheit weiter in diese hineinzuleuchten scheint, weicht das Mythische einfach in die fernere Vergangenheit zurück.[54]

The beginnings of human history are interwoven with the presence on earth of gods: the time before Min in Egypt, and the generations about Dionysus, Heracles, and Pan in Greece (2.145). Herodotus started the Egyptian *logos* with the question who of all human beings were 'the first' (*prōtous genesthai pantōn anthrōpōn*, 2.2), or, in our terminology, 'in history'. Inquiring further about beginnings, he makes the remark about leaving aside 'divine questions' (*ta theia*, 2.3) quoted above, to start the section on Egyptian culture in the next chapter: 'As far as human matters are concerned.' . . . (*hosa de anthrōpēia prēgmata* . . . 2.4).

Speaking about Polycrates and Minos in terms of 'thalassocratia' (sea power), Herodotus distinguishes the former from the latter (3.122): 'Polycrates really is the first of the Greeks we know of (*prōtos tōn hēmeis idmen Ellēnōn*) who ruled over the sea—except for the Cnossian Minos or if someone else before him (*proteros toutou*) ruled over the sea.' But Polycrates was the first 'within the so-called human generation' (*tēs de anthrōpēiēs legomenēs geneēs*). This passage is the *locus classicus* for a distinction in Herodotus between a *temps des dieux* and a *temps des hommes*, or the separation of myth from history.[55] About the 'time of the gods' Herodotus did not want to talk; as far as chronology is concerned, it occupies no absolute position. The time of the (Greek) heroes is different for Herodotus. He reflects on their influence on human affairs, just as he does with the gods (2.45; 8.109). Heroes are not completely superhuman (2.45), but the bones of Orestes are of somewhat larger size than men of today (1.67 f.). Vandiver (1991) takes the heroes in Herodotus to represent two kinds of reality at the same time: that of traditional myth and that of history. As Herodotus exemplifies with Heracles (2.44), the time of the heroes is different from the time of the gods.[56] Heroes do represent a

[54] Von Fritz (1967) I: 183.

[55] Vidal-Naquet (1960); Finley (1975); Darbo-Peschanski (1987) 25–38. More references Hunter (1982) 104 n. 9; see also, in this volume, Boedeker (Ch. 5, p. 110), Raaflaub (Ch. 7, n. 36), and Osborne (Ch. 22, p. 499).

[56] Hesiod's age of the heroes (*Op.* 156–73) is strictly separated from the 'iron age', which we may call the *spatium historicum*. They are 'a divine kin called half-gods, who lived before us on the boundless earth' (*ἀνδρῶν ἡρώων θεῖον γένος, οἳ καλέονται ἡμίθεοι, προτέρη γενεὴ κατὰ ἀπείρονα γαῖαν* 159 f.). They fought at Thebes and at Troy; after Troy the gods separated from living with men (fr. 204).

distinctive period within the time grid. The generation of the Trojan War and more so the generation of Heracles[57] are the major dates of reference within the *spatium mythicum*, which extends nine generations, or about three hundred years, from Cadmus (2.145; 4.147; 5.58 f.) to Orestes.

If Thucydides in the Archaeology completely levelled the difference between the time of the heroes and that of later periods, according to Hunter ((1982) 93–115) Herodotus did the same. As Strasburger himself pointed out, 'Er behandelt die menschlichen Figuren des Mythos weiter als historische.' Minos is a good example (1.171; 173). Strasburger's conclusion is ambiguous: 'Und doch zieht er auch zwischen dem entgötterten bzw. rationalisierten Mythos noch und der Geschichte [. . .], wiewohl er es nirgends scharf und prinzipiell ausspricht, einen deutlichen Trennungsstrich.'[58] 'Long ago (*to palaion*) the Carians were subjects of Minos' (1.171). At the battlefield of Plataea, the Athenians disputed the Tegeans' claim of priority, using 'recent' as opposed to 'ancient history' as an argument, both sides 'putting forth both recent and ancient accomplishments' (*kai kaina kai palaia parapherontes erga*, 9.26). Marathon represented recent time, the past events were 'the war against Thebes', 'a campaign against the Amazons', the Trojan War, and 'the return of the Heraclidae'. On the other hand, *to palaion* could also refer to the time of Polycrates (3.58), and the usage of *ta palaia kai kaina* does not represent a strict terminology of periodization.

When Herodotus believes that he has more substantial information about events of the mythical past, he subjects these to the same critical scrutiny as more recent events (von Leyden (1949/50) 95 f.). The best example is his critical *raisonnement* about what really happened at Troy (2.120). Although he seems to distance himself rather emphatically from the mythical constructions around the Trojan War right from the beginning (1.1–5), he on the other hand integrates this event with only a slight reservation into the short historical abstract he gives on the occasion of Xerxes' expedition against Greece (7.20). This is supposed to be 'by far the largest expedition we know of' (*stolōn gar tōn hēmeis idmen pollōi dē megistos houtos egeneto*) in comparison to Darius' expedition against the Scythians, the Scythian

[57] Prakken (1943) 19 and *passim*; Mitchel (1956) 52; Drews (1969) 6 f.; Burkert (1995); Giovannini (1995) 140–8.

[58] Strasburger (1982) 871 f. with more examples.

invasion of Media, and 'what is told of' (*ta legomena*) the expedition of the Atridae against Troy and the invasion of the Mysians and Teucrians into Thracia, 'before the Trojan War' (*to pro tōn Trōikōn genomenon*).[59] At the end of the *Histories*, he integrates the hero Protesilaus and the events of the Trojan War firmly into his account of the Persian Wars (9.116–20).[60]

The time grid that can be abstracted from the *Histories* combines horizontal and vertical linkages. Synchronisms in Herodotus are a regular device for linking different scenes of action.[61] Sometimes they serve a factual context, most often in the second half of the *Histories*. But often a synchronism simply organizes the material in time, like Cambyses conquering Egypt at the same moment as the Spartans attacked Samos (3.39). Frequently there are inconsistencies in detail which reveal the difficulties in imposing chronological order on such a mass of disparate material.[62] In other cases he was disposed too much to keep close to his various sources.[63] For the longer distances back into the past, Egypt provides the backbone (Hunter (1982) 50–92). The date for the end of the Saitic dynasty can be determined by connecting it with the Persian kings rather closely to about 525 BC.[64] Amasis is synchronized with Solon, Croesus (1.30), Cyrus (1.77), and Polycrates (2.182; 3.39–43), the latter also with Cambyses (3.39; 44). At the other end of the time scale, King Proteus attaches the Egyptian sequence to the Trojan War (2.112–120), and King Moiris is synchronized with Heracles (2.13; 145).

An obvious feature of the vertical structure of the time grid is what ethnology calls the 'floating gap': the present and the recent past are anchored in the remote past, far away in time; about the time in between not much is known.[65] Within classical studies, Gilbert Murray has remarked that 'There is a far-off island of knowledge, or apparent knowledge; then darkness; then the beginnings of continuous history.'[66] The Scythians provide the clearest example for

[59] Cf. Vandiver (1991) Ch. 5.
[60] Boedeker (1988) and this volume (Ch. 5, p. 115); Vandiver (1991) 223–9.
[61] Strasburger (1956) 157–60; (1962) 719–23.
[62] 'There was no Herodotus before Herodotus' is a *basso continuo* with Strasburger (1956).
[63] This is a main point with Mitchel (1956).
[64] Strasburger (1956) 138; (1962) 690 f.
[65] Vansina (1985) 23 f.; 168 f.; Cobet (1988) 229; Bichler (2000) 35–42.
[66] Murray (1907) 29, quoted as the opening sentence in Snodgrass (1971) 1.

this with the various versions of their origin. Herodotus' Greek history basically testifies to the same structure. The generations about the Trojan War and Heracles mirror the organization in time of Greek saga as an elaborate version of Greek beginnings. Furthermore, these stories are connected with oriental history by means of Greek devices; they reveal no knowledge of bronze age history. The Lydian and Assyro-Babylonian history is connected with the distant past over a long gap without any name or event. The Egyptian sequence consists of three stages of such a gap. Between Sethos and Moeris there are not enough names and events to really cover the distance, between Moeris and Min there are none. Min is identified as a start, but there are still more stages of 'history' back through empty spaces of time.

To organize and measure all these distances, Herodotus uses lists of kings with the years of their reigns. Where they are missing, he enumerates names representing generations; the prototype for this is the Spartan king list (7.204; 8.131).[67] A still more abstract procedure is to count by generations without giving names, short of just giving bare figures, as he does several times. He once explains a possible base of counting: three generations can be taken as one hundred years (2.142), which fits in for example with the Persian kings (6.98). Those who criticize Eduard Meyer's theory that there is also a forty years count for one generation behind the genealogical constructions found in Herodotus, which Meyer based on the Spartan king list, must be right, since there would still be more variants if we also take into account the examples of the Lydian, Assyrian, and Egyptian sequences.[68] Herodotus counts back 400, 800, 900, 1,000 and 2,300 years from his own time (2.13; 44; 53; 145 f.).[69] Unfortunately there are too few (Egypt) and in other cases too many (1.7) generations for the given time span. Burkert and Giovannini rightly point out that if we take just the genealogies as a dating criterion, the contexts Herodotus reports on at the farther end of the once floating gap would have to be put at much lower dates: the Trojan War,

[67] In this respect it does not matter whether these two lists are meant to be Leonidas' and Leotychides' pedigrees or real king lists: Cartledge (1979) 341–6; Vanicelli (1993) 35–8.

[68] Mitchel (1956) 64 f.; Ball (1979); Mosshammer (1979) 105–10; Burkert (1995) 143f. Giving more credit to Meyer: Prakken (1943) 18–48.

[69] One thousand instead of 1,600 years for the Greek Dionysus is Wilamowitz' conjecture, convincing to me for the genealogical context: Prakken (1943) 33 n. 74; 41; Burkert (1995) 141 n. 22. *Contra* Mitchel (1956) 60; den Boer (1967); Darbo-Peschanski (1987) 31.

for example, would have to be dated about 910 BC.[70] In the historiographic process of fixing a tradition in time the gap is still floating.

The distance separating the time of Homer's narrative from his own and his audience's lifetime has been closed. Therefore the twofold division of mythical and historical time does not really apply to Herodotus. Instead, I recognize three distinctive periods beyond the *spatium 'adēlon'*, the time nobody can know of: 1) the complex stories about beginnings, the age of the Greek poets' gods and heroes, traditionally the mythical period; 2) the meagrely filled in 'floating' gap or 'Dark Age'; 3) the *spatium historicum* in the proper sense, to be divided into the horizon of the oriental kings and the 'recent past' of the three generations. This last difference vanished as historiography became a continuous habit with the ancients. This development resulted in a *historia continua* in a growing library to which Eusebius finally could refer. To fill the once floating gap was an operation of historicization by antiquarian means with doubtful sources. The modern concept of a 'Dark Age' certainly reflects the structure of ancient tradition about the past as we find it reproduced and systematized in Herodotus' organization of time.[71]

Kyklos, *Process, and Contingency*

Herodotus' sentence on 'the cycle of human affairs' (Croesus speaking to Cyrus, 1.207) and his programmatic declaration about the rise and fall of cities through time (1.5) are often taken as evidence for a cyclic notion of history as opposed to the notion of a one-way linear process. 'In seiner Auffassung der Geschichte hat die Zeitzählung keine grundlegende Wichtigkeit.'[72] Indeed, divine intervention, *hubris*, circumstances of the *conditio humana*, *topoi* like the wise advisor or the punishment by the gods of the crossing of natural boundaries such as the Hellespont convey the impression of repetitive patterns which turn time into a mere secondary dimension of what is told.[73] This in a sense is even true of the whole sequence of the oriental kings

[70] Burkert (1995) 141; Giovannini (1995) 140–8.

[71] Snodgrass (1971) 1–2; Morris (1997).

[72] Strasburger (1954) 400 f.; (1968) 422–4; cf. Cobet (1971) 178 f. Against the thesis of a general cyclic orientation of ancient historiography, going back to Augustine's verdict against the Platonic conception of time, Momigliano (1966); Cobet (2000) 10–16.

[73] 'General causes' with Vansina (1985) 132 ff.

from Croesus to Xerxes. On the other hand, besides the *topoi* and the repetitive elements of each unit there is an ascending line starting with the Croesus *logos* as a preliminary to the Persian sequence: the narrative units from Croesus to Darius taken together prepare the climax with Xerxes (Cobet (1971) 158–71). It is, of course, the event of the Persian Wars that instigated such an approach. To Herodotus' contemporaries, the expanding Persian empire opened up a universal perspective on history.[74] In this major process which Herodotus' narrative portrays, contingency, the coincidence of events in space and time, is a characteristic feature of the *Histories* (Meier (1978)). The notion of 'otherness' and 'coexistence of different times' is a clear illustration of this. Out of a multitude of traditions with their specific chronologies, Herodotus created a narrative continuum of historical time organizing the oldest chronology transcending various cultural traditions. Looking at our topic from far away, Arno Borst ((1990) 11) summarized about Herodotus:

> Er verglich grundverschiedene Zeitbegriffe und Geschichtsbilder miteinander [. . .] Die Sterblichen auf der vielgestaltigen Welt hatten nur eines gemeinsam: Zeitgenossenschaft. Wo sie handelnd und reagierend aufeinandertrafen, vollzog sich Geschichte, und durch ihre relative Gleichzeitigkeit datierte sie Herodot.

The narrative of the *Histories* as a whole organizes and integrates different horizons of memory into an unequivocal and unconvertible sequence, attributing to 'the wide open space of time, in which everything is possible' (5.9.3), a definite structure. Although this structure is abstract in the sense that it is open to contingencies and capable of receiving more stories, it conveys an unmistakable interpretation of historical time. It actually represents the beginning of Western tradition to be continued by Thucydides and ancient historiography in general. A cyclic view on the uncertainties of human history in general may represent Herodotus' personal theological and philosophical outlook. Nevertheless, two features especially, the sequence of empires[75] and processuality, progress into the future, give momentum to a *historia perpetua* which later was to be reinforced by Alexander and the universal success of the Roman empire.

[74] 'Handlungszeit' moves towards 'Weltzeit', to speak with Dux (1989) 278; cf. the quotation in note 4 above.

[75] In Herodotus the Assyrians, the Medes, and the Persians (1.95; 102 ff.; 130). Cf. Alonso-Núñez (1988).

HISTORY AND ETHNOGRAPHY

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

EGYPT

Alan B. Lloyd

An interest in things ethnographical was not new in Herodotus' time. Already in Homer we see numerous examples of a concern with non-Greek peoples, real or fictional,[1] and the surviving fragments of Hecataeus of Miletus provide ample evidence of this phenomenon.[2] It is clear and natural that these ethnographic interests were closely linked to geographical speculation. This is most obviously the case in the parallelism between the early Greek division of the earth into two continents, i.e., *Europē* and *Asiē*, to each of which is allocated an archetypal 'barbarian' people, the Scythians in *Europē* and the Egyptians in *Asiē*. This neat mapping of the world is slightly impaired for Herodotus by the introduction of *Libyē* (Africa) as a third continent,[3] but its influence is still patent in the fact that the two longest and most searching of all Herodotus' ethnographical excursuses are those dealing with Egypt in Book Two and Scythia in Book Four.[4]

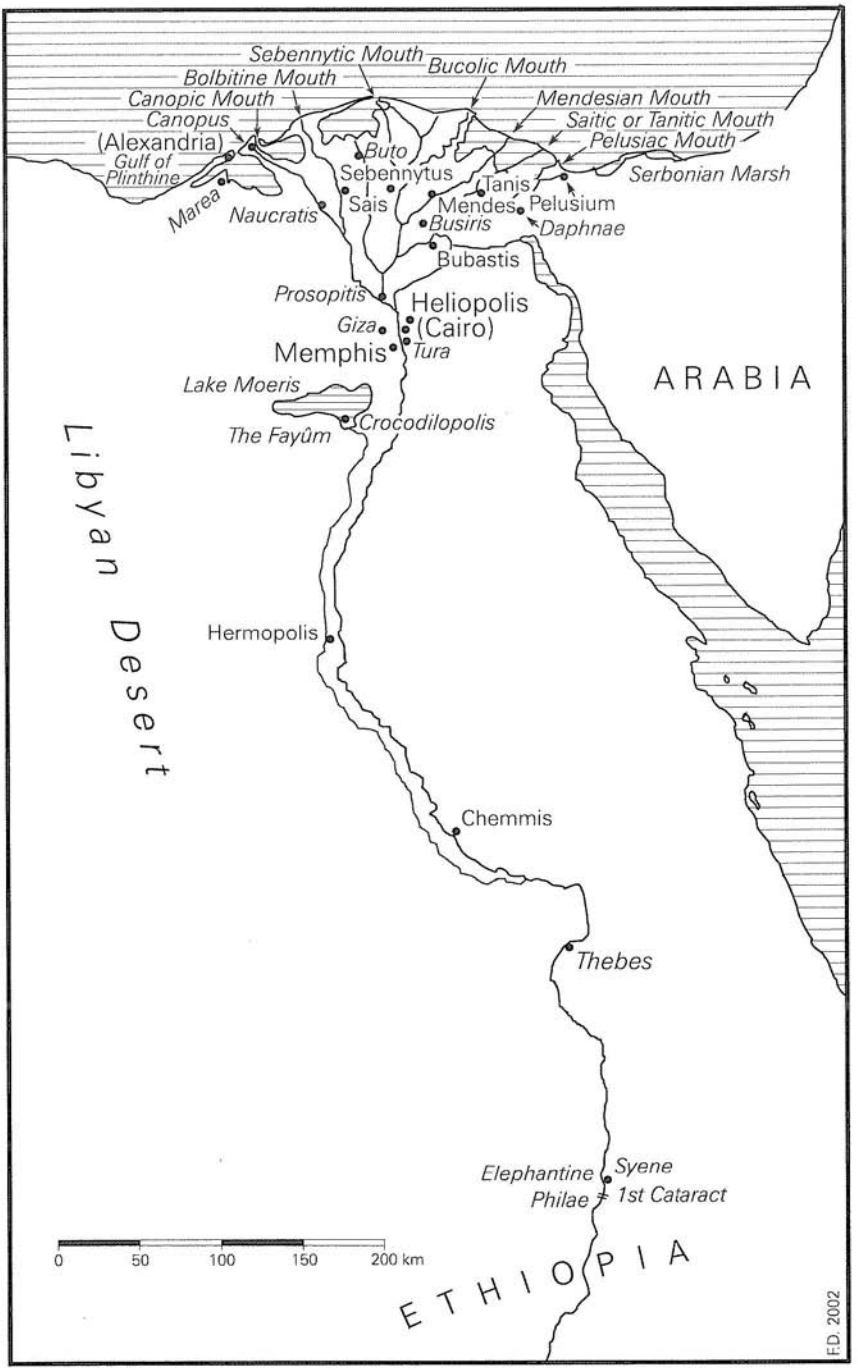
The origins of these ethnographical preoccupations are not far to seek. At the most basic level they are part of a mapping process by which any culture defines the physical world in which it finds itself, but there is also a deeper psychological imperative at work. Self-definition is a fundamental requirement if any individual, social group, or society is to be able to locate 'self' psychologically in its world, negotiate terms with that world, and thereby make it tractable. An essential part of this process of self-definition is defining 'self' in relation to other human beings. Evidently, 'others' can present themselves basically in two forms: (a) 'others' with whom there is a perceived

[1] E.g., the Egyptians, Ethiopians, Lotus-eaters, Carians, Lycians, and Phoenicians; see Wace and Stubbings (1962) 283 ff., for a convenient survey.

[2] For the fragments see Jacoby (1923) I.

[3] See Lloyd (1975) 126 ff.; (1976) 82 ff.

[4] Much has been written on Herodotus' ethnographical interests: Grassl (1904); Trüdinger (1918); von Fritz (1967) 128 ff.; Müller (1972); Rossellini and Saïd (1978) 949 ff.; Hartog (1980); Mora (1986) 60 ff.



Egypt. Adapted from W. G. Waddell, *Herodotus Book II* (London 1939), 16.

identity and sense of solidarity; (b) 'others' who are regarded as disparate. The first group may include a wide range of categories: those who are perceived to be biologically linked with the individual, e.g., the family, lineage, or clan; units defined by shared functions, interests, or geography, such as clubs, groups of colleagues, churches, or towns; politically defined structures such as the state; and possibly, though not universally, groups defined by genetically determined physical characteristics. Group (b), on the other hand, will comprise all those with whom no such sense of corporate solidarity is recognized. The perception of such differences will have two major effects. Most obviously, it defines disparate entities which must be conceptually located in one's world. Less conspicuously, by the very act of recognizing 'otherness' the consciousness is defining more precisely a sense of 'selfness'.

Herodotus' *Histories* are explicitly presented at their very beginning as the commemoration of the achievements of Greeks and non-Greeks, but it is more than that. The work becomes an exploration of the very nature of what were, to Greeks, the two major categories of human being and, *ipso facto*, of humanity as a whole. It is, therefore, raising, exploring, and meditating upon the critical questions: 'What is it to be Greek?'; 'What is it to be a non-Greek?'—and it is doing this in a historical context where these questions had been posed in an unnervingly stark and immediate manner by the great confrontation between the Persian empire and Greece. Herodotus is, therefore, engaged in nothing less than responding to the intense challenge to define 'self' and 'alien' which the experience of that war presented.[5]

Within an account of the clash between Greece and the Persian empire some discussion of Egypt has a natural place: the incorporation of Egypt into the Persian empire made it one of the many major military and economic forces ranged against the Greeks; the fact that the Persians could conquer such a great and wealthy nation said much for the capacities of the Empire; the conquest also formed part of an inexorable dynamic of western movement which reached its crescendo (at least to Greek observers) in the clash between the states of mainland Greece and the armies of Darius and Xerxes; and, finally, an analysis of Egyptian civilization contributed much to the characterization of the non-Greek, the 'barbarian', the deadly

[5] In general see Hartog (1980); Hall (1989).

foe which the Greeks had to confront and overcome if they were to survive.

Easy though it is to identify the logic for the inclusion of an Egyptian section in the narrative, it must be conceded that Herodotus has indulged himself mightily in his Egyptian excursus and produced a discussion which is seriously out of scale. It has frequently been argued, with considerable plausibility, that it was originally a separate piece written as an independent ethnographic inquiry and subsequently imported into the account of the Persian Wars when the relevance of such a discussion became clear.[6] On the other hand, it might be the case that, once Herodotus had got started, the discussion grew and that no opportunity or inclination subsequently intervened to edit it down to an appropriate scale.

It is possible to detect a number of factors determining what Herodotus discussed and the presuppositions which he brought to bear. There is, of course, no attempt to provide a clinical and objective view of Egypt. Greek foci of interest are all-powerful, whether it be Egypt's impact on Greek history, its influence on Greek culture, strident differences between Greek and Egyptian ways of doing things, or the real or imagined moral lessons that might be learned by Greeks from Egyptian historical experience. Greek perspectives are also in evidence in the pervasive influence of *to thōmasion*, 'the marvellous' (i.e., to a Greek), a point which Herodotus explicitly concedes in his famous sentence, 'I shall speak at some length of Egypt because beyond all lands it possesses very many wonders and marvels which pass all power to describe' (2.35.1). On the other hand, similarities, real or imaginary, between Egypt and Greece can act like a magnet to draw him into rampant cultural diffusionism, and Greek religious inhibitions can lead him to avoid discussing certain aspects of Egyptian belief. Herodotus' thinking on all these matters shows the marked influence of contemporary ethnographic theory: Pindar's relativism is strongly endorsed—'custom is king in all things', and cultural practices must be treated as valid culture by culture (3.38.4); the operation of the widely current custom/nature polarity is clearly visible;[7] and he is convinced of the pervasive influence of environment in creating Egyptian customs.[8]

[6] On this issue, see Jacoby (1913) 330 ff.; Fornara (1971a) 1 ff.; Lloyd (1975) 66 ff.
[7] 2.45.2–3. See further Hunter (1982) 264 ff.; Corcella (1984) 74 ff.
[8] See below, p. 433.

A striking feature of Herodotus' narrative of the Persian Wars is his willingness to indicate sources, and Book Two is a particularly remarkable example of that trait. At the very beginning of the *Histories* he describes the work as an *historiē*, 'inquiry, investigation',[9] and this 'inquiry' he pursues in Egypt using three stated methods: autopsy (*opsis*), 'opinion', i.e., an expression of personal opinion based on evaluation of data (*gnōmē*), and inquiry or hearsay (*historiē, akoē*) (2.29.1, 99.1, 123.1, 147.1). For our context the first is very prominent in his discussion of geography, geology, botany, zoology, customs, and sites, both archaeological and inhabited. 'Opinion' is widely and explicitly present in matters of religion and tradition whilst hearsay evidence is very much his stock-in-trade for history and traditions: in the earlier part of the *Aigyptios logos* he inquires and 'hears' mainly from the priests and 'other Egyptians', but in historical discussions from the reign of Psammetichus I onwards his oral sources are mainly Greek (2.154.4). That these sources yielded data of variable value he knew full well, and he issues a clear warning to that effect: 'Now as for the claims of the Egyptians, people can use whatever they find credible. As for me, it is my policy throughout my narrative to record what each group says as I heard it' (2.123.1, cf. 7.152.3). In addition to these stated sources he was also influenced deeply by the Greek tradition on Egypt. This began with Homer who played a major role in defining and disseminating the Greek image of Egypt, but he also drew much from and reacted strongly against the geographical and ethnographical tradition developed by the two great Ionians Anaximander and Hecataeus of Miletus.[10]

Let us now consider how all this works out in practice.

Political and Social Structure

Herodotus had available a clear definition of what an Egyptian was: 'Egypt is the area which the Nile inundates when it rises, and those people are Egyptians who live below the city of Elephantine and

[9] The word can be used to denote 'inquiry, investigation', whatever the method, or to refer to specifically oral inquiry. In the first line of the *Histories* it is the former sense which is at issue (Lloyd (1975) 81 f.).

[10] On the sources for Book Two, see Lloyd (1975) 77 ff.; (1988b) 23 ff.; Fehling (1989); and Pritchett (1993).

drink from this river' (2.18.3), a definition which no ancient Egyptian would have had any difficulty in accepting. His comments on their physical appearance are, at first sight, puzzling: at 2.104.2 he describes them as 'dark-skinned and curly-haired', which certainly describes many an Egyptian (cf. 2.57.2), but both in ancient and modern times the range of physical types goes well beyond that. However, we should not make too much of this. Clearly we must allow here for a Greek concept of the 'symbolic' Egyptian, i.e., if a spot-check were taken amongst Greeks to name two Egyptian characteristics 'dark-skinned' and 'curly-haired' would be the likely result, and, if an artist of any kind required a physically identifiable Egyptian,[11] he would work with these descriptors.

Within this body of people Herodotus perceived a society dominated by kingship and divided into seven distinct classes (*genea*) which were defined by their 'crafts'. These are enumerated at 2.164.1 as the priests (*hirees*), the warriors (*makhimoi*), the cowherds (*boukoloi*), the swineherds (*subōtai*), the inland-traders (*kapēloi*), the interpreters (*hermēnees*), and the pilots (*kybernētai*). Elsewhere he also talks of craftsmen, fishermen, and the peasantry, but they clearly did not present themselves to him as groups which could be defined by their 'crafts' in the same way as the seven classes listed above, perhaps because they lacked the tight corporate unity which he probably perceived in the *genea*.[12] Birdcatchers, though frequent in the Egyptian record, find no place in his narrative, despite the fact that Herodotus was well aware of the Egyptian predilection for eating birds in a variety of forms (2.77.5).

Kings occupy a dominant place in Herodotus' account, and it is through them that the historical narrative unfolds.[13] The political power of this institution is, of course, a major area of divergence from the *eleutheriē* or 'freedom' which is so often praised as a distinctive feature of the Greek world (cf. 2.172.5). Herodotus is clearly aware that the main principle of succession was heredity, but he knows perfectly well that other factors can intervene, e.g., he speaks

[11] Making 'Egyptians' even remotely genuinely Egyptian could well be surplus to requirements. The 'Egyptian' context of Euripides' *Helen* dispenses completely with anything that could be called Egyptian local colour!

[12] Note that the swineherds are stated to practise exclusive intermarriage (2.47.1).

[13] Herodotus' account of Egyptian history is studied in depth by von Fritz (1967) I, 158 ff.; Drews (1973) 56 ff.; and Lloyd (1988b).

of a priest of Hephaestus (Egyptian Ptah) becoming king at 2.141.1, by a conversion of ecclesiastical into royal power which is easily paralleled in Egyptian history. He is also aware that the political coup bringing a usurper to the throne was not unknown in Egypt (2.162.2). Divine assistance was available to kings, and Herodotus mentions several cases of them receiving messages through oracles and dreams (Mycerinus, 2.133.1; Sethos, 2.141.3–4; Psammetichus, 2.152.3). These rulers are correctly described as ruling over a country divided into nomes (administrative districts comparable to an English county). Herodotus mentions eighteen of these (less than half), all but one in the Delta, a fact which reflects nothing more than the general Delta bias of his narrative.

Herodotus was well aware of the Egyptian tradition that Egypt had initially been ruled by dynasties of gods (2.144.2), the first 'human' king being Min. For him the sequence of native kings ended with Psammenitus (Psammetichus III) who was deposed in 525 by Cambyses and subsequently executed. Most of the text from 2.99 to 3.64 is devoted to the description of royal actions, though for our purposes Cambyses will be left out of consideration.[14] The astonishing timespan over which this human history unfolded was one of the most extraordinary features of Egyptian history and received much careful consideration, not least because it gave the lie to received Greek wisdom on the past of Greece itself, and provided Herodotus with the perfect basis for the operation of the *post hoc ergo propter hoc* principle in arguing for the Egyptian origin of much of Greek culture.

The first part of this historical narrative covers the reigns of kings from Min to the Dodecarchs (2.99–141).[15] To the Egyptologist its most striking deficiency is the eccentric chronology which seriously displaces the Pyramid Builders, but it does include discussion of representatives of all the major periods recognized by modern Egyptologists: Thinite (Min), Old Kingdom (Cheops, Chephren, Mycerinus, Nitocris), Middle Kingdom (Sesostris, Moeris), New Kingdom (Rhampsinitus), the Libyan Period (Asychis, Anysis), the Nubian Period (Sabacos, Sethos, the Dodecarchs), and the Saite Period (Necho I,

[14] On the Cambyses tradition, see Posener (1936); Klasens (1944–8) 339 ff.; Schwartz (1948) 65 ff.; Kienitz (1953); Otto (1954); Bresciani (1958) 167 ff.; Gyles (1959); Drioton and Vandier (1962) 600 ff.; Porten ((968); Kraeling (1969); Waters (1971), 53–6; Lloyd (1982) 166 ff.; Brown (1982) 387–403; Lloyd (1988a).

[15] For detailed commentary on this section, see Lloyd (1988c) 1 ff.

Psammetichus I, Necho II, Psammetichus II (Psammis), Apries, Amasis, Psammetichus III (Psammenitus). Only two of his kings are patently unhistorical—Pheros, who is a complete fabrication, and Proteus, who was imported from Greek legend.[16]

The actions attributed to this first batch of rulers are of varying historical credibility. They include imperialist expansion—Sesostris campaigns on the Red Sea Coast, in Asia, and in Europe (!), bringing back prisoners who were used for building and civil-engineering purposes. He also conquered Nubia which he is alleged, quite wrongly, to have been the only king to subdue. A recurrent activity is temple-building and embellishment—Min founds the temple of Hephaestus at Memphis, Moeris builds its north pylon; Sesostris erects obelisks and statues in Memphis; Pheros dedicated statues at Heliopolis; Proteus was responsible for a temple enclosure at Memphis; Rhampsinitus built the west pylon of the temple of Hephaestus at Memphis and set up statues in the same shrine; and Asychis constructed the east pylon at Memphis. (Much of this has some truth in it.)[17] Irrigation works such as canal-digging and dyke-building are also mentioned: Min is alleged to have diverted the Nile around Memphis, almost certainly wrongly; Sesostris is claimed to have been responsible for Egypt's canal system, despite the fact that it must have been much older, and his alleged motivation is distinctly odd; and Moeris is claimed, quite incorrectly, to have been responsible for the creation of Lake Moeris. Kings can also found cities: Min is asserted to have been responsible for the foundation of Memphis after he had reclaimed the requisite land; and kings also engage in spectacular tomb-building (2.124–36). In all these enterprises Herodotus rarely mentions the existence of administrators or agents acting on Pharaoh's behalf. Sesostris is described as using his brother as regent at 2.107.1, and Thonis holds the office of 'Guardian of the Canopic Mouth of the Nile' (2.113.3), but otherwise rulers operate in isolated omnipotence. This almost exclusive concentration on royal action may simply arise from a narrative dynamic which insists on a sharp and exclusive

[16] Pheros' name is clearly based on the Egyptian title *per-aa*, the origin of the English Pharaoh, but he was clearly identified in later tradition with Amenemhet II of the Twelfth Dynasty (Lloyd (1988c) 38 ff.). Proteus is an import from Homeric tradition (Lloyd (1988c) 43 ff.).

[17] Herodotus' accounts of Egyptian buildings have been discussed in detail by Lloyd (1995) 273–300.

focus on the protagonist, but it is perfectly possible that it owes something to Egyptian tradition for which such exclusivity is normal.

With the beginning of the account of the Saite Dynasty in 664 (2.147 ff.) the narrative moves more firmly into the world of history, but a great deal of what we have identified in the earlier historical narrative is still in evidence. Familiar fields of activity recur: imperialistic expansion is ascribed to Psammetichus, who campaigns in Asia, though the remarkable extent of these operations escapes Herodotus completely; conquests are also attributed to Necho II who operates in Asia and the Red Sea, the latter's ambitions furthered, it is claimed, by the enhancement of the Egyptian navy. However, we hear nothing of his campaign into Nubia; Psammis is described as invading Nubia (Ethiopia), but there is no reference to his known interest in Asia; and Apries engages in naval operations against Phoenician city-states as well as in a disastrous invasion of Libya. Finally, Amasis is claimed to have subdued Cyprus. Allied to all this are calculated diplomatic activities such as gifts to Greek shrines ascribed to Necho and Amasis and Amasis' relationship with Polycrates of Samos. Temple-building continues to be a major royal activity: the Dodecarchs are stated (wrongly) to have built the Labyrinth, and Psammetichus later built a pylon at the temple of Hephaestus and a court for the Apis bull. Amasis constructed a pylon in Sais as well as colossal statues and large sphinxes; he also attempted to set up an allegedly monolithic shrine, erected colossal statues at Memphis, and built a temple of Isis there.[18] Whilst every item in this catalogue cannot be confirmed archaeologically, there is nothing intrinsically implausible here. Tomb-building is less in evidence, though we do hear of the royal necropolis at Sais, but this disparity simply reflects the fact that the construction of royal burial installations on the grand scale was very much a thing of the past.

Herodotus, however, goes much further in his history of Egypt than attempting to lay down a historical framework and explicitly or implicitly ascribes character and motivation to these kings: ambition to excel is highlighted in the case of Asychis; benevolence features in the accounts of Sesostris, Mycerinus, and Sabacos; Pheros and Sethos are shown as pious and Mycerinus as just; arrogance is

[18] This Isis temple cannot be identified, but Amasis' interest in this goddess is gratifyingly confirmed by his temple constructed in her honour at Philae (Haeny (1985) 197 ff.).

ascribed to Sesostris, Pheros, Cheops, Sethos, and Mycerinus, and vengefulness to Nitocris, Sesostris, and Proteus; a streak of ruthlessness emerges in Nitocris, Sesostris, Pheros, Cheops, and Chephren, and the trickster in Nitocris, Rhampsinitus, and Mycerinus; magnanimity features in the behaviour of Rhampsinitus, and Proteus is described as maintaining the moral order. Whether these motives or character traits were inherited in material from Egyptian informants or imported by Herodotus cannot be definitively resolved, though the coincidence of this body of motives with those occurring elsewhere in Herodotus' *Histories* justifies the strong suspicion that they owe much to his standard narrative apparatus (see Lloyd (1988c) 1 ff.).

The characterization of the Saite rulers is very much in line with what we are told of these earlier Egyptian kings. The omniscient, proactive, dominant ruler is much to the fore: it is Psammetichus who recognizes the significance of the oracle and acts at 2.152.5, and it is he who consolidates relations with Greeks for the benefit of the kingdom; it is Psammetichus who is alleged (inconceivably) to have attempted to establish the sources of the Nile, and it is Necho II who is behind the alleged circumnavigation of Africa; similar problem-solving expertise is assumed in the case of Psammis who is required to unravel a difficulty in which the Eleans found themselves; Amasis' alleged foundation of Naucratis provides yet another example of the proactive ruler; benevolence features in the behaviour of the Dodecarchs, as also in Amasis' treatment of Apries; arrogance as well as ruthlessness are attributed to Apries, and vengefulness to Psammetichus. Necho can show acquiescence in the divine will, but much of Amasis' behaviour is characterized by irreverence. However, in his relationship with Polycrates he is described as showing a firm grasp of the workings of the divine order, even if that order is unequivocally Greek. Some rulers can also appear as tricksters, Amasis in a didactic context and in relation to Cambyses and Psammenitus with lethal consequences to himself after his capture by the Persians.

Herodotus is explicit on his sources for Egyptian history. To begin with there is a very heavy emphasis on Egyptian tradition (under which heading he prioritizes the priests)[19] supplemented by autopsy,[20]

[19] For the character of Herodotus' priestly tradition, see Lloyd (1975) 89 ff.
[20] On autopsy, see Lloyd (1975) 84 ff.

but from 2.147 they are reinforced by non-Egyptian sources, pre-eminently Greeks[21] who had acquired direct knowledge of Egyptian history from their participation in making it. As a result Herodotus is justifiably convinced that his account of the XXVIth Dynasty is very much more accurate than what precedes. The main, if not the only, source of information accessed through these informants was oral tradition which had evolved over many centuries in the case of pre-Saite kings. There is some historical foundation for much of what he says, but oral tradition is intrinsically fluid and retains only what is needed or considered relevant to a given generation. The past is there for the benefit of the present and is far from being a sacrosanct set of data. Traditions may, therefore, be supplemented, rearranged, trimmed, often radically customized, depending entirely on current social, political, or conceptual imperatives. The historically specific is, therefore, gradually lost, and situations and individuals are progressively assimilated to archetypes.[22] They would, in addition, have assimilated or been affected by such influences as folklore, political and cultural propaganda, myth, tales explaining monuments or features of monuments, myth, and even ritual practice. Nevertheless, the general trend of the accounts of these rulers reflects the classic activities of Egyptian kings. Such actions appear in the traditions recorded by Herodotus, even when they are not historical, because they are part of the agenda of Egyptian kingship, i.e., the kind of things which Egyptians expected a king to do. Therefore, the character of this tradition indicates that an authentic image of Egyptian kingship was getting through to Herodotus, even if very little genuine history frequently came with it. It follows that the patent historical inadequacy of so much of 2.99–141 should not be taken as proof that the narrative did not emanate, at least in some measure, from Egyptian sources, however much it may have been contaminated in transition.

Once in Greek hands, the process of evolution of these traditions was influenced by new factors: the introduction of elements from Greek tradition, chronological misunderstandings, over-schematization, analogies with things Greek which may then be imported into Egyptian accounts, an emphasis on things of relevance and interest

[21] See Lloyd (1975) 116 ff. Usually Herodotus simply refers to them as *Hellēnes*, but references to Ionians and Cyreneans do occur.

[22] See Lloyd (1988a) 60 ff.; (1988b) 39 ff.

to a Greek audience, and the pervasive predilection for the marvellous. To all this we must add the Herodotean agenda. We have already described the contemporary-relevance principle applied to tradition in oral societies, and that principle still exercised a profound influence on Herodotus' writing, but Herodotus belonged to what was, at least in part, a literate society, and the advent of literacy induced a progressive reorientation, though this was neither immediate nor indeed complete. The capacity to record 'facts' in writing has the effect of exteriorizing and objectivizing them. To a much greater extent than in oral society these data *are*, and their reality must be accepted and respected. To Herodotus certain phenomena in which he is interested and on which he focuses existed/took place in space and time. They are realities which form a matrix of fact, but the important thing about such realities is their significance to his Greek audience, and he worked on the basis that he had complete freedom to use whatever narrative techniques he felt necessary to put over their perceived significance to his readers. Therefore, the modern rigorous distinction between fiction and non-fiction is not appropriate to the reading of Herodotus, or, for that matter, to historical writers of the ancient world in general. Put simply, he clearly felt justified in editing, supplementing, or highlighting received historical tradition as he thought fit, and, if this involved departing from what we call history or even adding non-historical elements, he felt at complete liberty to do so.

Thus it is that, underpinning the account of Egyptian history and explaining it, we find a Greek moral universe. Egyptian history is used to illustrate and confirm fundamental Greek perceptions of the way the world works: the punishment of Pheros (2.111), the moral disquisition at 2.120, the concept of divine punishment at 2.139, the rewards of piety at 2.141, the fall of Apries from unparalleled good fortune (2.161.2; 169), Psammenitus' recognition of the pathos that can arise from the transitory nature of human well-being (3.14), and, most telling of all, the quintessentially Greek moral thinking driving the narrative of the relationship between Amasis and Polycrates and the latter's disastrous end (3.39–43). This remarkable episode reveals with complete clarity the relationship between historical matrix and customization. The basis is evidently an alliance concluded between Polycrates and Amasis for strategic reasons in the face of the growing threat of Persia. This alliance was terminated, probably by Amasis and probably because Polycrates had become more of a liability than

an asset. This situation is then picked up by Herodotus, together with legendary material to produce a 'novella', a literary form aptly described by George Coates:

> A novella is a creative construction by the author, designed to meet the author's distinctive goals. The author presents not simply what happened long ago and far away, but rather what happened and continues to happen so that the traditions carried by plot structure capture each new audience. Historical figures and events are caught up into an imaginative fabric produced by the creative activity of the author. Its concern is not to report historical events . . .[23]

One final point should be made before leaving Herodotus on Egyptian kingship. The author shows no awareness in his historical narrative, or anywhere else, of the Egyptian ideology of divine kingship, i.e., that the king was conceptualized as a god incarnate, the living embodiment of the god Horus. He does indicate that gods could communicate with him by dreams and oracles, though these were media which were available to anyone, and he does describe in the case of Rhampsinitus a capacity to break outside the normal boundaries of human action (2.122), but that is as close as he gets. Intriguingly, no classical writer does any better, despite the fact that there were Greeks who got very close indeed to Egyptian Pharaohs in the Late Period. We can only conclude that, whatever theory said, the divinity of Pharaoh did not impress itself on Greek observers in practical contexts and was very far from being evident.

Egyptian priests are frequently mentioned by Herodotus, particularly those of the major centres of Heliopolis, Memphis, and Thebes. The Heliopolitans are said to be the most learned, but priests in general are regarded as a major source of historical information. The priests were a topic of considerable interest to Herodotus because a dedicated priestly class was an unfamiliar phenomenon in the Greek world. He also comments on the odd practice whereby there was not one priest per deity but a whole group presided over by a high priest (2.37.5). He recognizes their potential to achieve political power when he informs us that Pharaoh Sethos had originally been a priest of Hephaestus. He is aware that the priesthood was in his time an hereditary office and has much to say about their personal habits.

[23] (1992) 980. On the applicability of the term 'novella' where Herodotus' work is concerned, see also Ch. 11, pp. 257–8, this volume.

In all this we can see both similarities to and contrasts with Greek practice directing Herodotus' attention to aspects of this important group, and much of what he says amply qualified to a Greek as 'marvels'. Well informed though he is, however, Herodotus shows no knowledge of the theory behind the institution of priesthood, i.e., that the chief officiant is the substitute for Pharaoh in temple ritual, and his function is to maintain deities which have the potential to die if they are not properly tended.[24]

According to Herodotus the Warriors were a large proportion of the population. They were a hereditary class made up of two groups, the Kalasiries (250,000 strong) and the Hermotybies (160,000 strong). They were based almost exclusively in the Delta, and each was given 12 *arourai* (8 acres) of land free of tax. They were required to devote themselves entirely to war, and he is particularly emphatic on their exclusion from all forms of *banausiē*, 'handicraft'. Their weaponry, at least in marine mode, is described as formidable, and they were well protected by helmets, shields, and breastplates (7.89.3). Every year the two groups had to provide a thousand men each to act as a royal bodyguard, and in return for this they received generous rations over and above their land-allotments. It is clear, though far from explicit, that Herodotus' description of this class is pervaded by contamination from his or his sources' knowledge of the Spartan elite warrior class, and that we must allow for severe distortion in this account from that influence. We should edit out anything here which smacks too much of Sparta.[25]

Cowherds were certainly numerous, particularly in the Delta area, and played a major part in the Egyptian economy, but Herodotus felt under no obligation to linger over them. The same held true of the swineherds and the inland traders. The interpreters interested him rather more since they were allegedly created by Psammetichus I to facilitate communication with Greeks. Finally, he talks of the pilots, a select group within those who plied the waters of the Nile who were expert in dealing with navigational hazards and are comparable to the elite corps of river pilots still to be found in Middle Egypt.

[24] Sauneron (1957) 27 ff.; Hornung (1983), 151 ff.; and Silverman in Shafer (ed.) (1991) 29, 64, 66–7.

[25] Froidefond (1971); Lloyd (1988a), 184 ff. It is a matter of some considerable doubt whether these late Pharaonic *Makhimoi* are the ancestors of the Ptolemaic class of the same name (Goudriaan (1988), 121 ff.).

The Economy

Herodotus' knowledge of the Egyptian economy is partial. He knows of the importance of agriculture and the contribution of irrigation to its success. He is also aware of the phenomenon of sedimentation. However, some of his comments betray a limited understanding and considerable inaccuracy: King Min is claimed to have engaged in land-reclamation works at the site of fifth-century Memphis, which was certainly untrue;[26] Sesostris is asserted, quite wrongly, to have devised the Egyptian canal system; and King Moeris is said to have been responsible for Lake Moeris, which he was not.[27] There are frequent references elsewhere to royal water direction or canal-digging: Nitocris (2.100.3), Cheops (2.127.2), and Necho II's abortive Red Sea Canal (2.158). True or not, however, there is no doubt that these traditions reflect an Egyptian perception that a critical function of the king lay in guaranteeing the workings of the irrigation system, a point made emphatically at the very beginning of Egyptian history by the mace-head of King Scorpion.[28]

Since Herodotus was highly aware of the importance of irrigation, it is a little surprising that he can say at 2.14.2 that Egyptian agriculture was easier than anywhere else. Here he is evidently focusing entirely on the fact that little, if any, ploughing would be needed, unlike in Greece, and that sowing the seed was a relatively easy task. However, he leaves out of account completely the enormous amount of labour required to keep the irrigation system up and running.

Herodotus refers to raw materials, mentioning the acquisition of stone from the quarries at Tura on several occasions and the transportation of granite from Elephantine. Beyond that he does not go. Metals he mentions, gold, copper, silver, and iron all featuring at some point, but there is no awareness of sources of supply or the

[26] Recent excavations strongly indicate that the settlement of Memphis moved gradually southwards during its long history, and that the site of 'Min's' Memphis lay to the north of the fifth-century site (Giddy, Jeffreys, and Malek (1990) 13; Giddy and Jeffreys (1991) 6; and Giddy and Jeffreys (1992), 2).

[27] The Fayum basin is a natural formation created by wind erosion. The lake was created when an offshoot of the Nile, now known as the Bahr Yusuf, broke through the western cliffs and flooded the lower part of the basin (Lloyd (1988c) 126).

[28] This monument dates from the late prehistoric period and shows the king wielding a hoe to create a canal (Spencer (1993) 56, fig. 36).

ease or difficulty with which Egyptian requirements might be met. There is nothing on the Egyptian timber problem, though he does mention the use of acacia in boat-building. He fails to grasp the enormous value of papyrus as, amongst other things, a timber substitute,[29] but he does recognize that it had its uses in boat-building (though not, oddly enough, to construct the hulls of boats), the weaving of ropes, and also in the making of sandals.

Manufacturing, in particular technology, does come in for some discussion. He can speak of craftsmen (2.141.4) as an identifiable group, even though he does not recognize them as a *genos*. He is aware of the use of the vertical double-beamed loom in Egypt and contrasts its technique of beating-in with that customary on the more primitive Greek warp-weighted loom; his discussion of Egyptian boat-building is most remarkable and corresponds closely to known Pharaonic practice;[30] building technology also attracts his attention, and he has much to say on the construction of pyramids and on the movement of large masses, not all of it as accurate as one would wish.[31] As for trade, he knew of the existence of inland traders (see above), the role of Naucratis as a Greek trading post (2.178–9), and a large-scale wine trade with Greek and Phoenician sources of supply (3.6), but there is also some awareness in the account of Naucratis and the wine trade that a high degree of centralization existed.

There are, then, strengths in what Herodotus has to say, but the strengths lie in detail. There is little evidence of insight into the way economic institutions worked in Pharaonic Egypt. Above all the critical role of storage and redistribution centres, such as palaces, temples, and large estates, finds no place in his account.

The Egyptian Belief System

Herodotus' choice of material for discussion in this area is partly determined by the conviction that much of Greek religion had an Egyptian origin and partly by 'the marvellous dimension' which attached to so much Egyptian religious practice (Lloyd (1975) 141 ff.).

[29] On the Egyptian use of papyrus, see Lucas and Harris (1962) index, s.v.

[30] On this intriguing account, see the studies of Morrison in Greenhill (1976) 161 ff.; Lloyd (1979); and Haldane and Shelmerdine (1990).

[31] See the analysis of Lloyd (1988c) 63 ff.; (1995) 274 ff.

The information is marked by a profound reticence in discussing what he had learned about the character and actions of the gods (i.e., myth and theology). This reticence is founded on the conviction that it was impossible to gain reliable knowledge on such topics (2.3). The concept of Fate appears at 2.133.3, but only as part of a tradition acquired from Egyptian priests which may have its distant origins in the Egyptian concept of *šay*, 'the predestined'.[32] The gods preoccupy him greatly, but he treads very carefully. He comments on an Egyptian opinion on the orders of gods at 2.46, but this does not break his rule because it is presented simply as a doctrine held by the Mendesians. Of consuming concern is the issue of the interrelationship between Greek and Egyptian deities, a preoccupation which leads him into pervasive *interpretatio graeca* culminating in the insistence that the vast majority of Greek deities are of Egyptian origin. Evidently Herodotus felt that his inhibitions need not extend to discussing this historical issue because it did not commit him to making statements about the *nature* of the gods on his own behalf; he was simply expounding his considered opinion on the origins of Greek concepts of divine beings. To him there were two main phases in the development of these concepts, the Pelasgian and the Hellenic. Pelasgian beliefs evolved in two phases: at first, the objects of cult in Greece were undifferentiated and unnamed gods. Subsequently, the *ounomata* of the gods, i.e., 'their names and personalities', came from Egypt and were taken up by the Pelasgians, not necessarily at one and the same time. These included the *ounomata* of all the classic Greek deities, with the exception of Poseidon (who allegedly came from Libya) and the Dioscuri, Hera, Hestia, Themis, the Charites, and the Nereids who were supposedly 'named' by the Pelasgians. Other religious material was also acquired from Egypt in this process. The Greeks subsequently took all this over, sharpened it up and and fleshed it out, a process in which Homer and Hesiod played a crucial part.[33] This ingenious but entirely erroneous construction means that, when Herodotus refers to the Egyptian Amun as Zeus or Neith as Athene, he is not using the Greek names as a matter of convenience for the sake of his readers. On the con-

[32] This interesting passage is discussed in detail by Lloyd (1988c) 81 ff. On the Egyptian concept of fate, see Grumach-Shirun in Helck and Otto (1984) 598 ff.
[33] See further Lloyd (1976) 232 ff.; Mora (1986) 189 ff.

trary, he is reflecting a profound conviction that the Greek and Egyptian deities are one and the same thing. The same issue of transference of doctrines arises at 2.123, where he insists, quite wrongly, that the Egyptians were the source of the Greek doctrine of metempsychosis.

Given his reticence on matters of belief, it is not surprising to find Herodotus concentrating much attention on observable phenomena. He speaks of iconography, and festivals occupy a great deal of attention: he distinguishes between different types and describes those of Artemis at Bubastis (2.60), Isis at Busiris (2.61), Athene at Sais (2.62), and Ares at Papremis (2.63), as well as those of Dionysus (2.48) and Demeter (2.122). He also speaks of the games of Perseus at Chemmis (2.91), which he evidently believed to be of a thoroughly Greek character.

Methods of communication between man and god are equally exempt from Herodotus' inhibitions since they too are observable phenomena. He speaks of portents and portent books, dreams, and oracles, all of the latter given by the gods, though methods could differ. He also has much to say on methods of sacrifice and the requirement for purity in temples. He devotes a substantial amount of space to sacred animal cults which had particular value as a 'marvel', but here again he concentrates on observable aspects such as the animals which were worshipped, the penalties for killing them, their maintenance, and their mode of burial. Egyptian mortuary practices are also a focus of much attention, particularly mummification which he discusses to good effect, clearly because of its status as a 'marvel'. He also speaks of repositories for the dead which he describes as 'sepulchral chambers'.

What, then, is our verdict on Herodotus' portrayal of Egyptian religion? Typically, although he knew a great deal of correct or largely correct detail, particularly on cult practice, he lacks any grasp of the concepts underpinning belief or ritual; he shows no awareness of the Egyptian concept of gods potentially subject to mortality who must be maintained by priestly action; in his account of animal cults there is no awareness of the thinking underlying these practices; and in his account of mummification he betrays no knowledge of why it was practised, though 2.122 shows that he knew something of the Egyptian concept of the underworld, and 2.78 reveals an awareness of the Egyptian preoccupation with mortality.

Daily Life

In discussing daily life Herodotus makes a distinction between those Egyptians who dwelt in the arable part of Egypt and those who inhabited the marsh area, i.e., the northern part of the Delta, but most of what he says is intended to be valid for the entire country, and it is only at 2.92 ff., that he addresses the peculiarities of the northerners. His dominant theme is the differences between Egyptian practices and those occurring elsewhere, above all divergence from Greek custom. His explanation for differences is the current Greek doctrine of environmental determinism, a concept which is virtually explicitly stated at 2.35.2, and at 2.77.3 he is unequivocal on the point when he insists that the reason why the Egyptians, after the Libyans, are the healthiest of men is the absence of change in the seasons.[34] Once established, this thesis is developed at some length and to excess: he speaks of contrasts in shopping practices, weaving, transporting burdens, urination and defecation, organization of the priesthood, care for the elderly, coiffure and practice related thereto, living arrangements with animals, bread-making, the kneading of dough and mud, circumcision, habits of dress, sail-making, and writing; the Egyptians are also described as the most pious of men who lay particular emphasis on ritual purity. At 2.77 ff. he specifically addresses the customs of the Egyptians who lived in the arable part of Egypt and are claimed to be the most learned in traditions of all men: they purge themselves for three days consecutively each month, believing that food is the source of all illnesses (certainly an Egyptian idea but also a view widely held in Hippocratic circles); they ate loaves of emmer wheat (as distinct from common Greek practice of using barley or naked wheat); they made 'wine' from barley (another contrast); they also consumed fish dried in the sun or salted and birds prepared in a variety of ways; they observed a macabre practice of displaying the image of a corpse at dinner parties to remind the guests of their mortality and encourage them to enjoy themselves. They do not import customs from elsewhere but follow home-grown practices only, though similarities with Greek practices are identified, e.g., in the Maneros/Linos song, in the extreme reverence for the aged (shared with the Spartans), and their wool taboo (shared with

[34] See the Hippocratic *Airs, Waters, Places* and, e.g., Snowden (1971) 172 ff.

such groups as the Orphics). They wore their linen tunics long with tassels at the hem (whereas Greek tunics were of wool), but they did wear woollen garments over them. Medicine in Egypt was highly specialized, unlike the situation in Greece.

The marsh dwellers provide contrasts both with the rest of the country and with Greece: unlike other Egyptians but like the Greeks they only have one wife[35] and exploit cheap food resources provided by the seeds of the rose lotus and papyrus stalks, though many lived exclusively from sun-dried fish; they made oil from the castor-oil plant which, unlike Greeks, they cultivated; and they had also developed an ingenious method of combatting mosquitoes by using their fishing nets as mosquito curtains (i.e., 'a marvel').

What is our final verdict on all this? The ethnography is characterized by a wide range of knowledge which has a sound basis in fact, but its focus is determined by Greek interests, in particular the focus on clear points of similarity and difference to Greek culture. This can lead to omissions and to serious distortion of the truth. Distortions can be aggravated by two additional faults, over-schematization and the too ready application of the *post hoc ergo propter hoc* fallacy. The historical material in the earlier section of Book Two amounts largely to a series of tales which are closer to Egyptian stories and propaganda texts than recognizable history, though Herodotus makes the most of their narrative possibilities to spin a good yarn and, where opportunities present themselves, he exploits their didactic potential for the benefit of his Greek audience. The Saite history is evidently much more firmly based on historical events, but here again it is impossible to allay the suspicion that events were chosen for discussion because they were of interest to Greeks, indeed frequently involved Greeks. We are not confronted with anything like a considered assessment of what really mattered in the Saite period, though historians are too often ready to work on that assumption. This section, however, offers Herodotus considerable potential for teaching his moral lessons, and the relationship between Amasis and Polycrates provides a superb example of the use of the '*novella*' which is fundamental to Herodotus' approach to the writing of 'history'

[35] A curious thing to say since the Egyptians were, in practice, almost entirely monogamous, whatever might be permitted in theory.

throughout his work. But be warned. These *caveats* on ethnography and history do not absolve us from confronting his narrative with Egyptian data, and that exercise frequently reveals a wealth of accurate data, even if, ultimately, Herodotus must be convicted of doing no more than skating over the surface of Egyptian civilization.

All is not surface, however. Depth lies elsewhere in this extraordinary narrative, i.e., in the fundamental tension and resolution of that tension which permeates the whole of the *Histories*. On the one hand, there is an insistence on difference which reflects the broad agenda of defining Greek and non-Greek. On the other, there is a profound willingness to tie Egyptian history into that of Greece to the extent that the Egyptians are claimed to be the ancestors of the Kings of the Dorians and much that is fundamental to Greek culture is alleged to have been imported from Egypt. Even the kings of Egypt are presented as inhabiting what is essentially a Greek moral and intellectual universe. Therefore, the centrifugal tendency of the Greek/non-Greek dualism is counterbalanced and mitigated by a centripetal imperative to create a unity out of this duality and thereby fuse the binary human world into a coherent, intelligible, and tractable whole.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

SCYTHIANS

Stephanie West

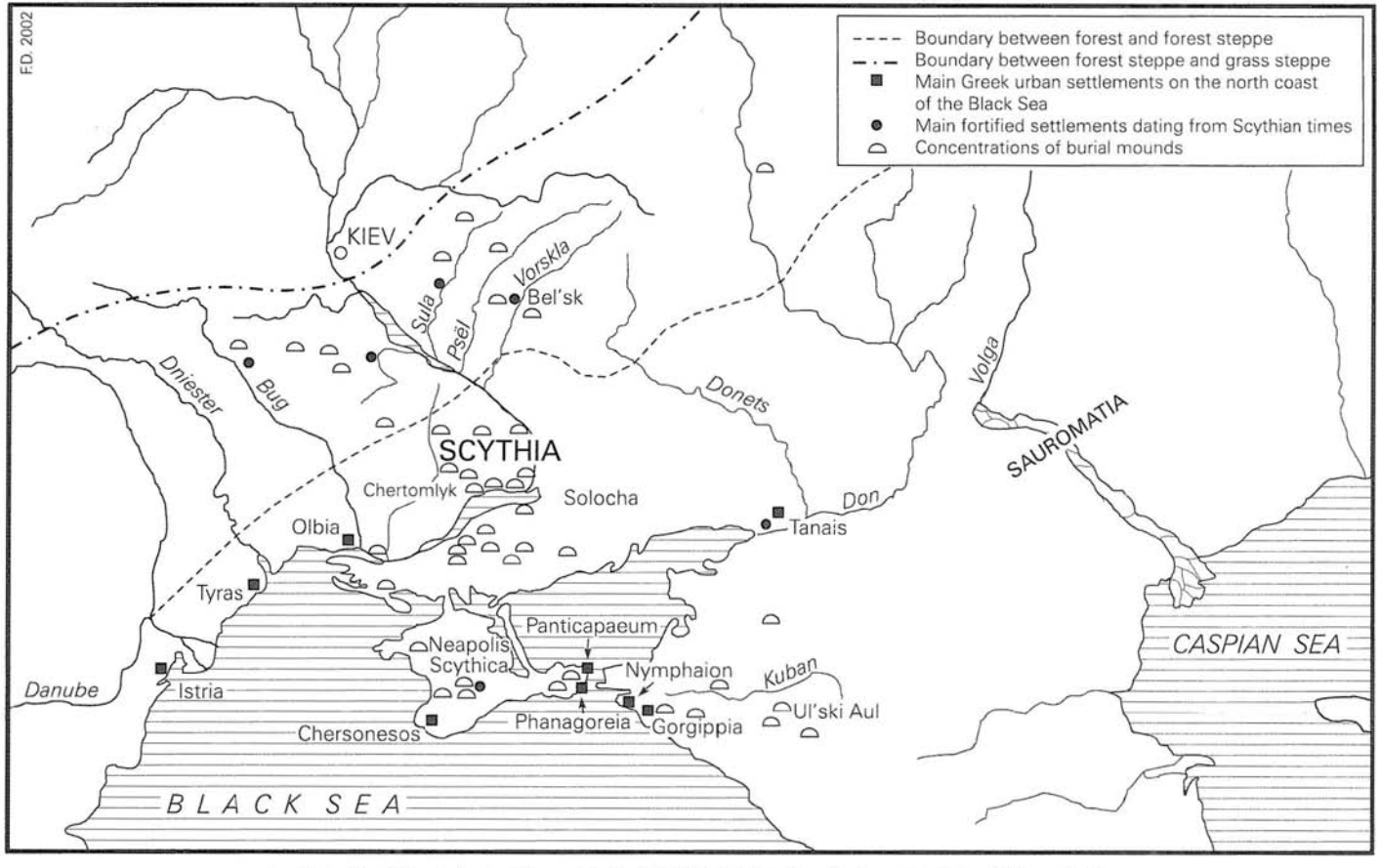
The Scythians enjoy a place of honour in Herodotus' work by reason of their success in thwarting Persian expansionism.[1] Darius' unsuccessful bid to extend Persian sovereignty north of the Danube forms the context for an account of the North Pontic region[2] and its peoples (4.1–144), just as Cambyses' conquest of Egypt provides a setting for the better ordered Egyptian ethnography in Book Two. The ground has been well prepared. The military effectiveness of Scythian mounted archers has been established early in the *Histories* by Herodotus' account of an invasion which resulted in their domination of Western Asia (i.e., from the Scythian point of view, the greater part of the known world) for twenty-eight years[3] (1.103–6; 130). Darius' campaign is presented as retaliation for that historically dubious incursion a century earlier (4.1.2, 4.4, 4.118 f., 7.20.2).[4] The motivation is

[1] To avoid cluttering the footnotes, I may note here a few works relevant to the whole of this chapter. Minns (1913) (a masterly study which has retained its value quite remarkably) and Rostovtzeff (1922) are of fundamental importance. The very full bibliography provided by Sulimirski and Taylor (1991) usefully supplements Rolle's invaluable introduction (though it is a pity that Rolle (1989) was not updated when translated from Rolle (1980), and the translator should have been more careful about the transliteration of Russian proper names). Bichler (2000) 15–110 offers a judicious and well-informed survey. On Herodotus Book Four Macan (1895), though somewhat dated, should not be overlooked; there is much of value in Dovatur et al. (1982). Corcella and Medaglia (1993) *ad loc.* is invariably helpful; likewise, on Books One and Three, Asheri (1988), (1990). I have been very sparing with references to publications in Russian, believing that this information will seldom be directly useful to readers of this chapter.

[2] A cumbersome phrase, but the older designation 'South Russia' long ceased to fit the region concerned.

[3] The curiously precise figure should probably be taken to represent a generation.

[4] While raids from the northern steppe were a persistent danger for the settled civilizations of Western Asia, and a raiding expedition lasting many years not in itself improbable, Near Eastern sources do not support the notion of a period of stable Scythian rule (*arkhē*). Does this strangely exaggerated picture reflect Scythian dreams of what they had once been and might be again? See further Ivantchik (1999).



Ancient Scythia. Adapted from Rolle (1989), 12-13. See further: R. J. A. Talbert (ed.), *Barrington Atlas of the Greek and Roman World* (Princeton 2000), maps 23, 84, 87.

highly characteristic of Herodotus, for whom reciprocity is an immensely important explanatory principle,[5] but can hardly be relevant to Darius' military aims which, like much else about this campaign, remain mysterious.[6] Herodotus, though evidently attaching importance to the expedition, is vague as to its date, offering simply a *terminus post quem*, 'after the capture of Babylon' (4.1.1.).[7] Ethnography here takes precedence over history, but this section is spiced by the appeal of a narrative turning on the discomfiture of a powerful aggressor at the hands of a tough, self-sufficient people determined to defend their independence. In the manner of their resistance the Scythians to some extent prefigure the Athenian role in the defeat of Xerxes; but Herodotus does not alert us to this partial parallel, and there is a danger of over-emphasizing its importance for his thought.

Ordinary Greek (and later Latin) usage could designate as Scythian any northern barbarian from the general area of the Eurasian steppe, the virtually treeless corridor of drought-resistant perennial grassland extending from the Danube to Manchuria.[8] Herodotus seeks greater precision, and this essay is focussed on his Scythians, who belong to the North Pontic steppe; their territory is defined as the area stretching northwards from the coast for twenty days' journey between the Danube (Istros) and the Don (Tanais), excluding the territory of the Tauri in the mountains of the Crimea and the coast of the Sea of Azov (Lacus Maeotis) (16–21; 47–58; 99–101). This is much too schematic, and Herodotus himself is not consistent in his demarcation of Scythia; we note that he mentions as a regular occurrence Scythians crossing the Straits of Kerch (Cimmerian Bosporus) from what (according to his account) is the territory of the Tauri to the territory of the Sindi (28.1), while to the west Scythians, Thracians, and Getae were evidently closely interconnected. Not all the groups

[5] See Gould (1989) 42–85, and Ch. 9, pp. 000–00, this volume. Herodotus makes no attempt to accommodate these episodes (or Sesostris' invasion of Europe (2.102–10)) to his introductory theme of hostility between Europe and Asia (1.1–5).

[6] Gardiner-Garden (1987) persuasively argues that Herodotus has conflated information relating to two campaigns, one between 520 and 514 against tribes just north of the Caucasus (to be distinguished from the expedition against the Saka Tigraxauda, recorded in the Behistun inscription) and a second across the Danube but short of the Dniester (cf. Strabo 7.3.14), sometime between 514 and 512.

[7] Hereafter no book number will be given in references to Book Four.

[8] Just as Achaemenid inscriptions use the term *Saka* for all the nomad tribes to their north, from the Danube to the Syr-darya. Modern works on the Scythians generally cover archaeological discoveries from the whole area of the steppe culture.

dwelling within this region were (in his view) properly called Scythian. He reveals a serious problem about the ethnic's denotation at 81.1, when he says that he had heard very different accounts of their numbers, both that they were very many and that true Scyths were few. These true Scyths seems to be those whom he calls Royal Scyths, that is, the group who claimed hegemony (20.2, 22.3, 56, 57, 59.1, 71.2, cf. 20.1), apparently warrior-pastoralists. It is generally agreed, from what we know of their names, that these were people of Iranian stock (Zgusta (1955)) though the population very likely included speakers of different dialects. But Herodotus also recognizes nomad Scyths who are distinct from the Royal Scyths (56, cf. 19 f.) and agricultural Scyths, rather oddly differentiated as *aroteres* (farmers) and *georgoi* (cultivators) (17.2, 18.1).[9] The Callippidae, who are (tantalizingly) described as Hellene Scyths (17.1; cf. the people of Gelonus (108)), are also agriculturalists. Other groups from this area may have Scythian customs and dress, but are not, in his view, Scythians (e.g., 17.1). The fluidity of the term even in his own usage is evident when he later says that the Persians call all the Scythians Sacae (7.64.2), which extends the term much further east.

It is not clear how he thought the Scythians differed from the people whom he believes they displaced. It should be noted that, though his identification of the pre-Scythian population as Cimmerians (1.2) has become a firmly established archaeological convention, there are no solid grounds for associating with the North Pontic steppe the *Gimmirri* of Near Eastern texts, who caused havoc in Assyria and Lydia during the late eighth and seventh centuries and whom the Ionian Greeks, on the strength of the similarity of the northerners' own name for themselves, identified with the mythical *Cimmerii* from the far west familiar from the *Odyssey* (11.14–19: see Heubeck *ad loc.*).[10]

It is obviously futile for us to attempt to clarify the relationship between the various ethnic groups; it looks as if the name *Scythes* was extended from one dominant group of Iranian stock to encompass a large number of culturally similar tribes, some of whom may have been Finno-Ugrian or Proto-Baltic.[11] Herodotus' reference to

[9] It has been suggested that *georgoi* is an adaptation of a non-Greek name.

[10] On whom see Ivantchik (1993a, 1997). The savage Tauri (99–103) in the southern Crimea may well have been an unassimilated pre-Scythian remnant.

[11] The problems presented by shifts in the denotation of the ethnonym Kirghiz offer an instructive parallel: see further Hatto (1980) 300–1.

trade with the neighbouring Argippaei 'conducted through seven interpreters' (24) no doubt reflects the story-teller's penchant for a significant number, but probably gives a fair impression of the prevalent linguistic diversity. Thucydides' comment (2.79) on Scythian divisiveness warns us against assuming that the region from the Danube to the Don was politically united under a single chief or clan.[12] The population was certainly less homogeneous than Herodotus supposed and it is clear from the archaeological record that there were changes between the time of Darius' campaign *c.* 513 and the mid-fifth century, though the differences seem not to have struck the Greeks. The history of the steppe has been characterized by successive waves of invaders from the east, who in the course of time are assimilated more or less completely by the earlier populations but whose arrival inevitably brings changes in the power relations between ethnic groups.[13] The Greek colonies clearly had some impact on the peoples of the hinterland, stimulating a taste for wine and providing immense commercial opportunities; whether we think in terms of straightforward trade or of protection rackets, Scythian chiefs were growing wealthy.

The river system provides a topographical grid for Herodotus' location of different groups; the principle is sound, but his conception is implausibly schematic, with rivers regularly running down at right angles to the coast, and the attempt to identify obscure streams is wasted labour. His orientation is confused and his conception of Scythia can hardly be reconciled with our maps; better geographical knowledge would surely have led him to see the improbability of his view of Darius' expedition (cf. Minns (1913) 116 f.). His difficulty in mastering his sources is indicated by his threefold exposition of geographical relationships (17–27; 47–58; 99–117) (cf. his threefold treatment of Scythian origins (5–13), a series of *Märchen*-motifs strung together in sad contrast to the selectivity of his account of Cyrus' origins (1.95.1)). This part of his work is important for our evaluation of the level of Greek geographical knowledge in the mid-fifth century, but, unsatisfactory as we may find it, we must remember that no one at this date had, or aspired to, the bird's eye view of topographical relationships to which cartographic conventions have

[12] Care needs to be taken over the translation of βασιλεύς in Book Four: 'chief', 'prince', or 'lord', rather than 'king'.

[13] See further Taylor (1994) 394, Bokovenko (1996).

accustomed us. Travellers (most commonly traders)[14] reckoned distances by the stages of a journey, normally in terms of what might be covered in a day. Problems of nomenclature must have been frequent, with different groups using different names for the same place (as with Byzantium/Constantinople/Micklegard/Istanbul) or people (compare German, Deutsch, Allemand, Tedesco, Niemecki).

In his much better organized account of Egypt Herodotus' repeated references to his own observations and inquiries make it impossible to doubt that he had visited the country without calling into question his good faith or at least regarding his first-person references as a kind of literary persona, a prototype for the widely travelled Sir John Mandeville. This is not the case with his treatment of Scythia. At an early point in his work (1.105.4), he appears to distance himself from those who have visited the region. Relating the terrible hereditary malady inflicted on the Enarees,[15] descendants of the Scythians guilty of sacrilege against Aphrodite during their seventh-century invasion of Western Asia, he says that 'the Scythians say that those who come to Scythia see for themselves the condition' of the victims of the goddess' wrath. Unless the text is more seriously corrupt than anyone appears to have supposed, Herodotus does not encourage us to believe that he himself had had the opportunity to observe the afflicted at first hand.[16] The only point where he is generally thought to lay claim to first-hand observation comes almost at the end of his Scythian ethnography. Confessing to uncertainty about population figures, he says that he was invited to draw his own conclusions from an immense bronze cauldron at Exampaeus (81),[17] allegedly embodying the results of a census conducted by Ariantas who, wishing to know the number of his people, ordered every Scythian to bring an arrow-head; from the material thus collected was made an enormous vessel, of which Herodotus gives the dimensions. I take the crucial phrase τοσόνδε . . . ἀπέφαινόν μοι ἐς ὄψιν to mean 'they indicated this much to me by way of illustration', rather than 'they showed (*or* offered to show) me', as it is usually understood. Of course Herodotus was probably not averse to using

[14] Polybius (4.39.11) terms ἐμπορικὰ διηγήματα (merchants' tales) what we should call 'travellers' tales'.

[15] On whom see further below, pp. 449–50.

[16] See further West (2000) 18 f.

[17] From 52.3 we learn that this lay somewhere between the Borysthenes (Dnieper) and the Hypanis (Bug/Sinyukha).

an expression which might suggest autopsy but fell short of an explicit claim to have visited the area.[18] In any case, we should not underestimate the problems of travel to the North Pontic coast; Polybius (4.38.11) regarded even Byzantium as lying outside those parts of the world generally visited.[19]

If Herodotus went anywhere in this region, he surely visited the city known to us as Olbia, though he himself preferred to call it the trading post or town of the Borysthenites (17.1; 78.3; 79.2).[20] The city's centrality in his account corresponds to its peculiar importance among the North Pontic colonies; if he had not himself been there, he must have been confident in the information provided by others who had. His description of the climate (28), suggesting the Arctic Circle rather than the Ukraine, argues against first-hand observation; certainly it rules out a prolonged stay. Away from the resort strip the reality was, as Aristotle knew (*Problems* 25.6), the 'continentality effect', the cold winters and hot summers characteristic of Inner Asia.[21] It is significant that Herodotus fails to realize that conditions of near-perpetual winter would have prevented keeping the herds of cattle and horses on which the Scythian lifestyle depended as well as the cultivation of grain vital for Greek trade with the area. While this chilly misconception, destined to become a cliché (cf. Hippocrates, *Airs, Waters, Places* 19.2–4, Ovid, *Epistulae ex Ponto* 1.3.53 ff.), might result from confusion with reports of conditions further north,[22] Herodotus would not have supposed that cold made it difficult for animals to grow horns (29) if he had ever heard of reindeer. His appeal to the *Odyssey*'s reference (4.85) to 'Libya, where lambs straightaway have horns' to support his theory of the importance of heat for this development suggests that the charm of an emphatic contrast distorted the picture. In general we need to be alert to the

[18] See further West (2000).

[19] For a thoroughly sceptical approach to Herodotus' northern travels, see Armayor (1978b).

[20] The circumstances in which the city received its new name on the authority of Apollo of Didyma are reflected in a bone plaque from Berezan dated to the third quarter of the sixth century; see further *SEG* 36.694; 40.611; Vinogradov (1994) 63 f., Dubois (1996) 146–54, esp. 148 f. On Olbia, see further Vinogradov and Kryzickij (1995).

[21] See further Backhaus (1976) esp. 179–81.

[22] It has also been suggested that the Greeks were over impressed by the tendency of the Straits of Kerch to freeze, as they believed that salt water would freeze only if the cold were extreme.

attractions, for other Greeks besides Herodotus, of a sharp antithesis between Scythia and Africa (and particularly Egypt).[23]

Whether or not Herodotus had himself travelled to the northern coast of the Black Sea, what he retails about the Scythians should be treated as a synthesis of information derived from various sources.[24] Greek contacts with the peoples of this region are in evidence already in the *Iliad* (first half of the seventh century). The North Pontic nomads enter Greek literature as 'noble milkers of mares, living on milk' and are associated with the Abii, 'the most decent of men' (*Iliad* 13.5 f.). Knowledge of the indigenous peoples steadily increased with the foundation of the Greek colonies,[25] but the dangers of the Black Sea tended to isolate the Greek communities on its northern shore. The name *Skythes* is first attested in the fragmentary *Catalogue of Women* (F 150.15; 151), ascribed to Hesiod but probably to be dated to the period 580–520. There the eponymous Scythes is the son of Zeus, and the mare-milking Scythians are described (together with the Ethiopians and Libyans) as a people 'whose mind is over their tongue', a phrase probably to be interpreted as expressing approval of prudent reserve (matching the praise of Spartan laconism which Herodotus attributes to the Scythian sage Anacharsis (77)). The distinctive features of the steppe lifestyle are encapsulated in a single line (F 151), 'the land of those who live on milk and have wagons as their homes'. For Herodotus and his contemporaries, Homer and Hesiod were the classics, the authority of their words enhanced by an overestimate of their antiquity;[26] their evident approval set a firm foundation for an idealized image of the North Pontic nomads.

Fuller, and more imaginative, treatment was given to the steppe peoples in the lost epic *Arimaspeia* of Aristeas of Proconnesus, which Herodotus twice cites (13.1; 16.1); though he evidently saw no problem in an early seventh-century date for Aristeas, the *Suda* is more likely to be right in making Aristeas contemporary with Croesus and Cyrus, i.e., with the fall of Sardis, *c.* 545.[27] Some ethnographic sophistication is indicated by the most substantial fragment (11 Bernabé,

[23] On the 'central opposition between Egypt and Scythia', see further Redfield (1985) 106–9.

[24] Lévy (1981) is very relevant; see also Shaw (1982/3).

[25] See further Ehrhardt (1983).

[26] Herodotus believed Homer and Hesiod lived some 400 years 'and not more' before his own time (2.53.2).

[27] See further Bolton (1962), Ivantchik (1993b), West [forthcoming].

1 Davies), which represents someone expressing amazement at the idea of seafaring. It is not clear how much Herodotus owed to this mysterious poem; the fact that it takes its title from the one-eyed Arimaspians, whom Aristeas did not claim to have reached (13) and in whom Herodotus does not believe (3.116), is not the only feature indicating that it was not primarily a hexametric travelogue. Nor is it clear how widely known it was, though it appears to have sufficiently impressed the author of the *Prometheus Vinctus*[28] for him to draw on it in devising the extraordinary itinerary inflicted on Io (707–35, 790–807).

More severely factual information was offered by Herodotus' great predecessor, Hecataeus of Miletus (*FGrH* 1) in his *Periegesis/Periodos Ges* (*Description of the World*). Its numerous but exiguous fragments discourage the supposition that Hecataeus said much about the customs or history of the peoples he mentioned; the work seems rather to have consisted of a series of itineraries enlivened by occasional items of interest. The few fragments referring to the North Pontic area (F 184–90; see Jacoby *ad loc.*) are quite unrewarding. However, we learn that Hecataeus classified the Melanchlaeni as a Scythian tribe (F 185), whereas Herodotus says specifically that they are not Scythian (20.2); so, though Herodotus must have digested the *Periegesis*, he did not follow it blindly.

More controversial is the relationship between Herodotus' account and that given in the Hippocratic *Airs, Waters, Places* (17–22). Whether or not this is really the work of Hippocrates is irrelevant here; but almost certainly it is to be dated to the latter half of the fifth century.[29] The antithetical climatic conditions of Egypt and Scythia (Greece being a mean between these extremes) provide the organizing principle for a discussion of the effects of environment on human development. The author is not a systematic ethnographer, and the distinctive, traditional steppe life-style hardly interests him. Reacting against both the idealizing image of the nomads and a realistic nervousness (cf. [Aeschylus], *Prometheus Vinctus* 709–12), he is indifferent alike to the endurance and skills entailed by their way of life and to the tactical advantages arising from independence of a fixed base. Scythian customs and physiology incur his contempt, and

[28] More likely Aeschylus' talented son Euphorion than Aeschylus himself: see further M. L. West (1990) 51–72.

[29] See further Jouanna (1996a) 82, (1996b) 274.

making no attempt at a general survey he concentrates on what he thinks he can explain by reference to his scientific principles. Thus aetiology governs his selection of material, and theory far outruns his empirical data. Notwithstanding the appeal of the image of the physician as traveller and observer, we should not suppose that he had actually visited the area. It seems most likely that he and Herodotus had some sources in common but were independent of each other; the work can usefully supplement Herodotus, but its author's prejudice against riding and life in wagons distorts his account and his status as a scientific observer should not pass unquestioned.[30]

The loss of so much earlier literature falsifies our perspective, and makes us overestimate the extent to which Herodotus was offering new information. Aristophanes' parody (*Birds* 941–3) has preserved for us Pindar's insight into the plight of the impoverished warrior-pastoralist forced by lack of transportation to abandon the traditional way of life (F 105, from a *hyporkhēma* addressed to Hieron I, composed sometime between 476 and 467): 'Among the Scythian nomads the man who lacks a wagon-borne home wanders an outcast from the host, and goes his way without fame.'[31] This appreciation of the underlying social and economic realities goes far beyond the fascination which the nomads' wagons continued to exercise until their supersession by the completely demountable yurt, which could be loaded on pack-animals. For Pindar's Sicilian audience the essentials of the steppe lifestyle were evidently a commonplace.

Of course, what Herodotus and other fifth-century Greeks knew about the Scythians was not limited to what they might discover on the spot or learn from books. Merchants involved in the trade which brought to Greece grain (cf. 7.147) and slaves must have carried home reports of life in the hinterland of the Greek colonies. Herodotus' tantalizing references to mixed Hellene/Scythian groups (the Callippidae (17.1), the town of Gelonus (108)) and to the Greek mother of the unfortunately hellenophil Scyles (78.1) indicate some social contact, though we might doubt whether Greeks had much opportunity to experience the hospitality of a nomad camp. Slaves of Scythian provenance (like the archers who provided the Athenian equivalent of a police-force, unflatteringly depicted in Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazousai*[32])

[30] See further West (1999b).
[31] I doubt if στρατῶν 'from the host' is sound.
[32] See further Hall (1989), Vos (1963).

should not be overlooked as a source of information. Hippocrates' reference (*Airs, Waters, Places* 21.3) to the ease with which Scythian slave-girls conceive is significant.[33] But, even if we disregard linguistic obstacles to communication, the majority of slaves from this area sold to the Greeks are likely to have belonged to groups conquered by the nomads and may well themselves have been strangers to the true steppe culture.[34]

In attempting to supplement Herodotus' account, to supply its deficiencies (which may sometimes be a matter of what he assumes we know already, as with his omission of any details of Scythian appearance or dress) and to identify its biases, we have two main, and to some extent overlapping, resources, ethnography and archaeology. Though we need to bear in mind the dangers of a synthesis combining details from vastly separated times and places, it would be absurd to neglect the insight which both can provide into the realities underlying Herodotus' account.

The vast stretches of the Eurasian steppe are favourable only to extensive animal husbandry, and its distinctive culture evolved early.[35] The need to find natural pasture requires mobility, and this dictated virtually every aspect of the nomads' lives, not only the structure of their dwellings but also the style of their clothes and their method of cookery.[36] This culture was based on a self-sufficient economy; its own resources could provide its essentials, and its mainstay, the horse, could be used either to barter peacefully for other commodities and services (including the skills of carpenter and wheelwright essential for the construction of wagons) or to allow a form of warfare in which the nomads were almost irresistible until the invention of firearms. To their victims their incursions seemed like a natural disaster, to be interpreted as a sign of God's wrath against a sinful people (cf. Isaiah 5.26–8). The extent of the raids by which the Scythians could supply their wants and satisfy a taste for portable luxuries is

[33] Formally this sentence is ambiguous, as it could refer to slave-girls serving the Scythians; but a reference to girls sold into service in Greece better suits his argument.

[34] See further Rostovzeff (1922) 212, Finley (1962), Braund and Tsetskhladze (1989).

[35] See further Sinor (1990) 1–18.

[36] Herodotus was surely mistaken in supposing that animal bones were normally used as fuel (61); the nomads should not have lacked dried dung. The detail may reflect a religious ritual.

indicated by the occurrence of their distinctive bronze arrow heads in Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Syria, particularly in the walls of towns, though we cannot always tell whether these are evidence of freelance forays or of assaults undertaken in the service of Near Eastern rulers.[37] Herodotus, who concentrates on an isolated 28-year campaign of conquest extending to Palestine and otherwise reduces the military effectiveness of the mounted warriors to a purely defensive function (46.2, 3), has underestimated the importance of war as a national industry. Whatever historical reality lies behind his account of Darius' campaign, the Persian king must have been concerned at the threat which the nomads could pose to the settled peoples of the Achaemenid empire.

The continuity of steppe custom makes it profitable to compare what we know of later groups,[38] and the accounts of mediaeval travellers are most illuminating. The limitations of Herodotus' account of Scythian customs become blatantly obvious when we compare the report on his mission to the Great Khan at Karakorum composed in the mid-thirteenth century by the tough and intrepid Franciscan friar William of Rubruck (Jackson and Morgan (1990)). 'On the third day after we left Soldaia we encountered the Tartars; and when I came among them I really felt as if I were entering some other world' (1.14): thus he recalled the beginning of his journey. His detailed, sober, and fair-minded report brings home to us how strange the culture of the steppe peoples must have seemed to the Greeks. Herodotus could present Egypt as Topsy-turvydom (2.35 f.) (rather as Europeans came to view Japan); his analysis is embarrassingly superficial, but at least conveys the idea that contact with the ancient civilization of the Nile valley might provide a standard of comparison for what it meant to be a Hellene. The steppe culture was too alien to allow such an exercise in self-definition.[39]

William's journey would have been impossible without official assistance. The exemplary efficiency of the Mongol empire was perfectly compatible with the nomadic way of life, to which the establishment

[37] This is not the place to speculate about the effects of such exposure to Near Eastern art and luxury.

[38] Cf. Minns (1913) 47 f. and Morgan (1986) on Mongols; Matthews (1989) 332–55 on Huns and Alans.

[39] Hartog (1988) esp. 35–60, who stresses Herodotus' exposition of Scythian 'otherness' as directed towards establishing what it meant to be Greek, underestimates this incommensurability. See further Dewald (1990).

of the capital at Karakorum posed no threat. Mobile animal husbandry calls for agreements over grazing rights; nomads may range widely in the course of an annual circuit, but they do not wander at whim. Herodotus rather tantalizingly reveals a glimpse of Scythian administration, (presumably primarily the control of grazing rights) in alluding to annual ceremonies performed by each *nomarkhos* (which may be translated 'district governor') in his own area (66).[40] The Scythian reputation for a well-ordered existence (cf. Aeschylus, *Eumenides* 700–3; F 198 Radt) is perfectly consistent with customs which seem to the sedentary primitive and savage.

Contemporary observation demonstrates that there are varieties of mobile pastoralism.[41] Many households may combine it with agriculture or hunting or fishing, and those who spend the summer in tents may return to solid houses in winter. Herodotus not only knows of agricultural Scythians (17.2; 18.1), but includes plough and yoke among the golden gifts fallen from heaven in the Scythian myth of their origins (5.3),[42] implying that there was nothing un-Scythian about farming.

It is not so straightforward to extrapolate insights in religious matters. Karl Meuli in his famous 'Scythica'[43] has long been thought to have elucidated the problems presented by the androgynous Enarees, victims (in Herodotus' view) of the 'female disease' (θήλεα νοῦσος), the inherited punishment for the sacrilege committed by their ancestors at the temple of Aphrodite (i.e. Astarte or Atargatis) (67; 1.105). Herodotus tells us that they attributed to the goddess their expertize in a peculiar form of divination, with the bast of the linden tree. Hippocrates (*Airs, Waters, Places* 22), who connects the condition with incessant riding, gives a fuller picture, outlining the physical deterioration which leads the victims to adopt women's clothes, work, and manner of speech; he adds that the natives, seeing a divine cause for this condition, hold such men in awe and reverence, a significant detail not found in Herodotus. Meuli, combining this evidence for a peculiar religious status with reports of occasional transvestism

[40] Significantly (in view of the importance of the Egypt/Scythia antithesis) the only other instance of this term in Herodotus comes in his account of Egypt (2.177.2).

[41] See further Vainshtein (1980), Levi (1989).

[42] Plough and yoke really constitute a unit; some have seen in these gifts the symbols of the Dumézilian three functions structuring Indo-European society.

[43] Meuli (1935); see also Halliday (1910–11), Margreth (1993), Taylor (1996) 210–14.

among Siberian shamans, has seemed to many to have accounted for this mysterious group. What to Herodotus and Hippocrates appeared to be a medical problem is thus to be interpreted as the outward manifestation of a religous calling. Meuli's views always command respect, but a reversal of gender roles is unusual among the shamans of northern Eurasia,[44] and seems generally to be regarded as an oddity, even if no odder than other requirements which the shaman's spirits might impose. Moreover, shamanizing as normally observed makes heavy physical demands on the practitioner, inconsistent with the enfeebled condition which Hippocrates attempts to explain. We might add that, if Meuli's approach is right, it implies alarmingly superficial observation and misconception on the part of the Greeks to whom Herodotus and Hippocrates owed their information. Shamans are figures of great authority and prestige within their communities, combining the role of prophets,[45] healers, weather-controllers, poets, and general advisers. It may be better to postulate a genetic abnormality.[46]

We really do not know enough about Scythian religion to say whether it can properly be called shamanistic, though Meuli ((1935) 121–7) saw impressive similarities between the procedure used by Siberian shamans to escort souls to the world of the dead and Herodotus' description, likewise as the conclusion of funerary ritual, of Scythian hemp-inhaling (73–5; contrast the reference to purely recreational pot-smoking among the Massagetae (1.202.2)). Herodotus' account can be nicely illustrated by the sets of hemp-smoking equipment found, far to the east, in the frozen tombs of Pazyryk in the Altai,[47] though the archaeological context does not settle whether its function was sacred or secular. Herodotus, indefatigably interested in ritual (60–2) but indifferent to theology, believed that the Scythians worshipped divinities who could be equated with Hestia, Zeus, Ge, Apollo, Aphrodite, Poseidon, Ares, and Heracles (59); these identifications are in accordance with the normal Greek approach to the problems of comparative religion, though a theological system in

[44] I have no idea whether it is commoner in Greenland and North America.

[45] We should not expect them to have to compete with other specialists in divination, as the Enarees apparently do (67).

[46] See further Lieber (1996), West (1999b).

[47] See Rolle (1989) 93–5, Corcella and Medaglia (1993) plate 59. On Pazyryk see further Rudenko (1970), Jettmar (1967) 82–140.

which Hestia was pre-eminent might be thought to call into question the validity of such equations (see Burkert (1990)). It seems a safe guess that the religious beliefs of the various North Pontic peoples were animistic, with plenty of local peculiarities and an undogmatic capacity to absorb foreign elements.

Some scholars have attached importance to the Ossetes' kinship with the Scythians; but study of Ossetic folklore and traditions is unlikely to prove rewarding for our purposes. Still, the very existence of their heroic epic, celebrating the Narts, insatiable in their appetite for drink and war,[48] should make us wonder whether the legend of Scythian descent from the three sons of Targitaus or Idanthyrsus' resistance to Achaemenid aggression had been celebrated by Scythian bards. Oral poetry does not, after all, require cumbersome equipment and has certainly flourished among the nomads of Inner Asia.[49]

Archaeology has spectacularly supplemented Herodotus' account, but we must resist the temptation to dovetail the results of excavation with Herodotus' text. Every year it becomes evident that the picture was far more complex and varied than it previously appeared, and the greater accessibility of publications relating to this region is cause for profound satisfaction.[50] The frozen burial mounds of Pazyryk, which have preserved perishable materials, have wonderfully enlarged our conception of the range of craftsmanship commanded by the steppe peoples. More recently there have been sensational discoveries at Arzhan and Issyk,[51] likewise far to the east of Herodotus' Scythia but culturally closely related.

Tombs are particularly important for the study of nomadic culture, since the lifestyle leaves few remains for the archaeologist; even today concentration on a few, easily portable possessions, among which a cauldron for cooking meat is likely to be the most bulky, may give the outsider a misleading impression of poverty. The grander burial mounds of the Eurasian steppe have preserved magnificent and extraordinary artifacts; the importance of this material was

[48] See further Dumézil (1930), (1978), Bailey (1980).

[49] See further Hatto (1980). For a representation of a Scythian minstrel playing the lyre see Rolle (1989) 95.

[50] Marchenko and Vinogradov (1989) is a valuable early example of this welcome trend, which brought the inauguration (in 1994) of a very relevant new journal, Ancient Civilizations from Scythia to Siberia.

[51] See further Rolle (1989) 38–44, 46–51.

recognized already by Peter the Great, who took steps to insure the protection of antiquities and thus laid the foundation of the marvellous collections of the Hermitage.[52] But spectacular artifacts, representing both the indigenous style of the steppe and, later, the work of Greek craftsmen, contribute only a small part of what we learn from the most impressive tumuli. Their very scale implies the organization (and feeding) of a considerable labour force, an indication of the firm administration which underlay the apparent freedom of the steppe peoples. Systematic excavation (as opposed to glorified treasure-hunting) has revealed the skill involved in their erection and the extent to which material was transported from elsewhere to construct the monument. Of course, rich grave mounds were attractive to robbers, and the enormous labour-force required meant that too many people knew the layout; many tumuli were plundered quite soon after their erection. But the evidence remains for extravagant slaughter of livestock; occasionally, too, a few human victims are found, who may or may not have chosen to lie with their dead master.

It is natural to compare Herodotus' account of a Scythian royal funeral and grave mound (70 f.). The variety evident among the tumuli so far excavated shows that he was wrong in supposing practice to be uniform; no doubt he generalized from what he could learn of the last such interment. A close match for his description has not been found, but the graves of the nomad princes of the sixth and earlier fifth centuries still await discovery, to bridge a gap between the rich tumuli of the Kuban (northern foothills of the Caucasus) and the fourth-century elite graves of the Ukraine, above all Alexandropol, Chertomlyk, and Tolstaya Mogila.

Renewed excavation of the Chertomlyk barrow (21 m. high) has revealed the extraordinary skill involved in its construction; the erection of this huge mound, involving more than 7,500 cubic metres of soil, was not simply a matter of enthusiastic spadework (as one might rather think from Herodotus' report (71.5)). Moreover, the stones used in its construction, some as much as 2.5 m. high, were brought from a distance of 2–8 km. Excavation has brought partial confirmation of the most memorable feature of Herodotus' description (72), 'a circle of fifty impaled young men upon impaled horses

[52] For excellent illustrations combined with some account of the development of Scythian archaeology, see Jettmar (1967), Artamonov (1969), Rolle (1979), *From the Lands of the Scythians*, Rolle (1989), Rolle et al. (1991), Schiltz (1994).

standing on ghastly guard about a Prince's tomb' (Minns (1913) 88). By the foundation of the fence were found the bones of nine horses, pieces of harness and some human bones (Chernenko (1994) 47).

We must resist the temptation to speculate about the beliefs implied by Scythian burial practices. But the artifacts consigned to the tombs of fourth-century chieftains are not irrelevant to Herodotus' account. The work of Greek craftsmen in gold and silver (metals not to be found in the steppe region) show that Scythian magnates were growing wealthy, no doubt from the almost limitless commercial outlets opened up by the Greek colonies. The much reproduced vase from the Kul' Oba kurgan, discovered in 1830,[53] revealed what Scythians looked like (contemporaries saw a resemblance to the Don cossacks)[54] and what men wore. (Women's everyday dress is more mysterious.) Male jewellery at its grandest, the marvellous gold pectoral from the Tolstaya Mogila[55] combines an upper frieze of scenes from pastoral life with a lower frieze of predatory animals (including griffins) and their victims, the latter a strange application of Greek craftmanship to themes characteristic of the indigenous 'animal style'.

More modest graves contribute solidly to our view of the Scythian world. Among the tumuli so grouped together that they can be described as cemeteries, there is sufficient variation in grave-goods to indicate diversity in status and wealth. Not only men were buried with the standard military equipment of bow, quiver, and arrows, spears, and sword; the presence of weapons (along with spindles, mirrors, and jewellery) in an increasing number of women's graves in the Scythian region (and an even higher proportion from the Sauromatian area to the east of the Don) has revealed what led to the location of the mythical Amazons in this area (cf. 110–17, Hippocrates *Airs, Waters, Places* 17). These 'Amazon' graves raise interesting questions, but we should emphasize the practical value of such skills in defence of animals and family, particularly valuable when

[53] See Minns (1913) 200–2, figs. 93, 94, Artamonov (1969) 69, plates 226–9, 232–3, *From the Lands of the Scythians* plates 17, 18, Rolle (1989) 66–8, plate 22, Corcella (1993) plates 24–6 Schiltz (1994) 169–72, plates 124–27.

[54] Alexander Blok was behind the times when he described them as 'Asiatics with greedy eyes slanting' (*The Scythians*).

[55] See *From the Lands of the Scythians* plates 31–3, Rolle (1989) plates 14–18, Corcella and Medaglia (1993) plates 33–4; Schiltz (1994) 12 f., 60 f., 63, 68, 194–203, plates 145–8.

the men of a group were absent, raiding or rounding up beasts;[56] better to arm women than slaves.

Some light has perhaps been thrown on the mysterious city of Gelonus which Herodotus (108) describes as situated in the forest steppe region towards the north-east, and surrounded by high wooden walls nearly four miles long each way; its buildings were wooden, and it contained altars and temples to the Greek gods constructed in a Greek manner; its inhabitants, who spoke a mixture of Greek and Scythian, were descended from Greeks who had come from the trading stations (by which Herodotus must mean the settlements from which the colonies developed). Many fortified settlements are now known from the forest steppe region; outstanding among them is that of Bel'sk on the River Vorskla.[57] Its ramparts are 20.5 miles long, and the oldest building phase goes back to the seventh or sixth century. Its identification with Gelonus can be regarded as no more than speculation, but Greek connections are indicated by the abundance of Greek pottery found there (over 10,000 pieces), two very Greek-style gems, one of which bears a Greek inscription of which only three letters survive, and a spindle with Greek graffiti. It was the first site of a skull-cup workshop (cf. 65) to be discovered.

Olbia is central to Herodotus' assemblage of information, and we might expect that the city's relationship to the surrounding population has coloured his account. He does not much admire Scythian customs (46.2), and his curious description of the processing of mare's milk (see West (1999a)) involves a practice of unaccountable brutality, the blinding of the slaves employed in this task (2), which strikes a disturbing keynote (cf. 1.73). The victims of Scythian arrows from the early fifth century interred in the necropoleis of Berezan and Olbia are one indication of Scythian pressure on the city, as is the retreat of the population at this period from the *khōra* (agricultural territory) to greater security in, or close to, the city, which had, it seems, for a time to acknowledge a barbarian protectorate;[58] Herodotus cites the Scythian ruler's agent (*epitropos*), Tymnes, for informa-

[56] See Rolle (1989) 86–91, Melyukova (1990) 106. On the general all-round competence of women among the nomads see Minns (1913) 84; among twentieth-century Mongols: Cable and French (1950) 169 (possibly somewhat starry-eyed).

[57] See further Shramko (1987) esp. 121–6, 160–3, 174–9, Rolle (1989) 117–19, Tsetskhladze (1998) 50, 54 f.

[58] See Vinogradov and Kryzickij (1995) 130–3.

tion about Anacharsis.[59] The city's attractions led to the downfall of the philhellenic Scythian prince Scyles, to be dated apparently to the first half of the fifth century (78–80); the discovery, some six miles from Istria, of a ring bearing his name in Greek script (together with an inscription on its band which should perhaps be taken as an attempt to render Scythian in Greek letters)[60] adds vividness to Herodotus' story, and, in particular, to the detail that Scyles' mother, herself Greek, had taught him to read.[61]

It is cause for regret that it was not the custom among the Scythian nobility to label their possessions. We cannot strictly say that the Scythians were illiterate, though surviving examples of their use of script are very few.[62] Idanthyrsus' symbolic message of a bird, a mouse, a frog, and five arrows (131–2) should not be construed as evidence of illiteracy; the objects conveyed his meaning unimpeded by any language barrier, and this type of code enjoyed a long life in Inner Asia.[63] But certainly a dearth of texts leaves us in doubt how to interpret much that excavation has revealed, and there is a risk of circularity in relating archaeological evidence to Herodotus' account. We should bear in mind the warning of an archaeologist well aware of that danger: 'We think we know a lot about Scythian life, but most comes through Greek eyes and texts. The Greek-style finds and Herodotus are given prominence, but the majority of the sites and tombs tell a different story, of a people immune to most Mediterranean ways of life and probably more likely to exploit than to be exploited by the newcomers from the south' (Boardman (1994) 216 f.).

A hundred years earlier, R. W. Macan, in the introduction to his commentary on Books Four to Six, emphasized the difficulty of formulating any general assessment of Herodotus' account: 'there is no page on which fact and fiction—if so crude a distinction may be admitted for the sake of argument—are not to be found lying side by side, or indissolubly interpenetrated, mutually affected, not as oil

[59] In view of Herodotus' Carian connections it may be significant that Tymnes has a Carian name. It should not be assumed that Olbia was the only place where Herodotus could have conversed with him.

[60] See further Rolle (1989) 123–7, Vinogradov (1997) 613–33, Tafel 39.

[61] On the importance of the bilingual offspring of mixed unions in the transmission of alphabetic literacy, see Coldstream (1993).

[62] See further Harmatta (1990), (1992); *SEG* 42 (1992) no. 681.

[63] See further West (1988).

and vinegar, but as water and wine' ((1895) xxvii). An air of authority suggesting first-hand observation or informants of unimpeachable credentials is integral to Herodotus' narrative style. But, however determined we may be to uphold his basic good faith, and to insist that whatever elements of fiction may be found in his work do not result from his own conscious invention, we have to allow that he must often have been uncertain about the provenance and reliability of items of curious information accumulated over the years from hearsay and across language barriers. We cannot hope to trace the extent to which he himself tacitly rationalized (or exaggerated) the improbable or supplied links between data which were in reality unconnected or connected in quite a different way. As Darius' venture into Europe brings the menace of Persian expansionism significantly closer to mainland Greece, Scythian ethnography forms a bridge between the two halves of Herodotus' work, and it would be surprising if his presentation was not affected by knowledge of what was to come. Macan's advice remains sound: 'every separate story, every individual statement is to be tried on its own merits' ((1895) xiii).

CHAPTER TWENTY

THE ETHNOGRAPHY OF THE FRINGES

Klaus Karttunen

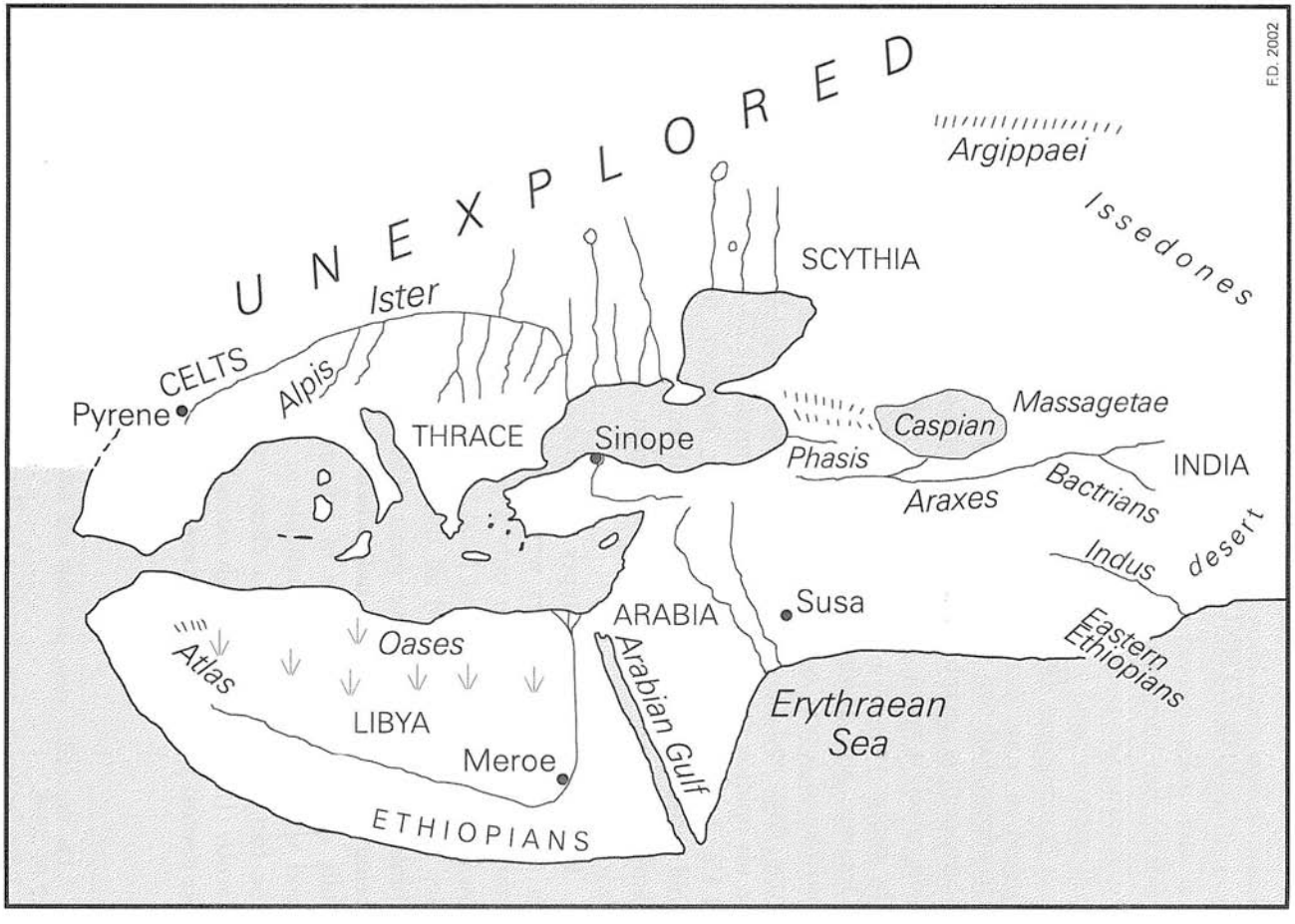
Herodotus and the rims of the world

Herodotus had two ways of dividing the inhabited world (*oikoumenē*/ οἰκουμένη), geographical and ethnographical. The geographical division, which is, *mutatis mutandis*, still used, is given in 4.36–45. Dismissing the earlier view of a circular earth fringed by the Ocean, the River Oceanus, and divided in two equal halves, Europe and Asia,[1] he introduced a new system with three continents of different size: Europe, Asia, and Libya (Africa). In several passages he made clear that in his opinion the Ocean was purely mythic (2.23, 4.8, 36, cf. 3.115, 4.45). In his ethnographical thinking, however, there was a threefold pattern which was applied to all three continents: the orderly and familiar centre, the intermediate region, and the fringes (*eskhatiai*/ ἐσχατιαί).

The methods and the types of source criticism used by Herodotus in ethnographical matters were the same as in history—after all, ethnography was for him only a subgenre of history. He made his own observations, collected local information, checked existing literary sources and analysed all these in the light of his own rational thinking.[2] He rarely gave exact references—the normal technique being to name the source only when one was criticizing it—but carefully distinguished the type of information he was relying on and said whether he found it reliable or not. However, in the case of the fringes he rarely had a choice of source. His own travels (see Jacoby (1913) 247 ff.), though extensive, never went beyond the familiar central parts of the *oikoumenē*. For the fringe regions, he depended

[1] On this earlier view, probably still followed by Hecataeus, see Romm (1992) 20 ff., 32 ff.

[2] See further the long discussion by Hartog (1988) 260 ff.



The World according to Herodotus. Adapted from J. O. Thompson, *History of Ancient Geography* (Cambridge 1948), 99 fig. 12.

on a few travellers' tales and his only way of checking was often his own rational mind.

While the larger ethnographical *logoi* or excursuses had a well-defined place in the scope of his great history—countries such as Egypt, Scythia, and Libya were described when they first emerged in the history of the Persian empire—the fringes were just appendices. They were not necessary, but certainly entertaining.[3] The fringes were different, completely different, which fascinated Herodotus and probably his readers, too. An often-returning theme is the relativity of manners (see Dihle (1981) 196 ff.), discussed in a way sometimes called inverse ethnocentrism. The main interest for Herodotus in ethnography was the *nomos*, and the difference in *nomoi*, and he made a serious attempt to accept every culture with its own values. The emphasis is often on those features that differ most clearly from Greece, though a diffusionist viewpoint makes him also note the similarities.

> For if anyone, no matter who, were given the opportunity of choosing from amongst all the nations in the world the set of beliefs which he thought best, he would inevitably, after careful consideration of their relative merits, choose that of his own country. (3.38; trl. De Sélincourt)

Special prominence was given to rites because these were thought to be ancient and unchanged and thus to provide evidence for the origins of nations. Here the diffusionism was important and similarities in ceremonies led Herodotus to derive, for instance, Greek ritual customs from Libya (4.189) and Libyan from Greece (4.180). The problem is, of course, that Greek mythology and mythic prehistory were taken for granted and everything was fitted into it (in much the same way that classical and other mythic and early histories were later fitted into the Bible).[4]

Like most authors, Herodotus wrote what he thought was interesting for his audience and, like everybody else, he interpreted what he learned in the light of what was familiar to him.[5] Conscious or

[3] See, however, Ch. 15, above, pp. 321–2.

[4] The same tendency runs through the Greek ethnological literature: see Bickermann (1952).

[5] In the case of Herodotus this meant *interpretatio graeca*, but when, for instance, a Scythian was explaining Greeks to his compatriots, the Scythian was certainly using *interpretatio scythica*.

unconscious selection and simplification was also inevitable, an attempt to sift out what seemed essential and leave out what seemed secondary. More than two millennia later, the results do not always satisfy us, but this is hardly a reason to criticize him.

There are two approaches to the study of classical ethnography and both have their uses and strong points. The first compares the different accounts of the distant regions of the inhabited world to each other and analyses them in the light of Greek literary tradition, also taking the possible sources and later influence into account. The second is more interested in the particular regions discussed by Herodotus, sifting his material in order to find information which is then compared to other available sources of information such as the (often later) literary sources and archaeological evidence. Both methods are justifiable and problems arise only when one is used in a way that completely ignores the other.

General patterns in Herodotean ethnography

In a fascinating article Michèle Rossellini and Suzanne Saïd (1978) have defined a conspicuous pattern in Herodotean ethnography. They have traced a system of three concentric circles: the centre, with Greece, contains the sphere of ordered, 'normal' life, with all the hardships of the prevailing Iron Age. Around it is the intermediate region inhabited by the various tribes of nomads. The outer circle contains the fringes of the inhabited world peopled by savages, but at the same time still abounding with the benefits of the Golden Age. The differences between these circles can be seen in every aspect of economic and social life: in religion and funeral customs, love and marriage, food and drink, habitation and means of living. The pattern was not invented by Herodotus—some traces of it are already seen in Homer and later it can be seen e.g., in Ctesias and to some extent also in Strabo—but its details are best illustrated in his work, being the only completely preserved example of early Greek ethnography.

In each case the series goes from the orderly and complicated system of the central region, especially Greece, through the simple, but still related ways of the nomads, to the primitive anarchy of the fringes. Thus the diversified religion of the Greeks, with so many gods and heroes and cults, with temples and holy places, is contrasted to

the simple religion of the nomads with only one or two gods and to the savages living completely without religion. The Massagetan religion is simple, the sun being their only god. The Arabians had two gods, Dionysus and Urania (3.8), while in Ethiopian Meroe only Zeus and Dionysus were worshipped (2.29). The majority of Libyans only sacrifice to the sun and the moon (4.188). The Thracians honour Ares, Dionysus, and Artemis (5.7). The Scythians know several gods, but Herodotus emphasized that their number is rather small (4.59).

Beside the elaborate funerals of the Greeks and the simple burials of the nomads are seen the exposure of corpses or cannibalism of the savages. Cannibalism was perhaps the most repulsive form of human behaviour known to the Greeks (and it has remained so in Europe ever since). As such, it belonged only to hoary antiquity and to the fringes of the world. A type of ritual cannibalism is mentioned by Herodotus in connection with the Massagetae (1.216) and Issedones (4.26). These two people held an intermediate position and accordingly we read that their cannibalism was considered a sacrifice. The victim was slaughtered together with cattle, which represented the normal kind of sacrifice for the Greeks. When somebody died of an illness, he was considered unsuitable for sacrifice and buried. The Indian Padaei (3.99 f.) practise cannibalism on sick and old members of their tribe, while among their neighbours, a man who becomes ill goes to the desert to die there without burial. In another passage (3.38) the eating of parents is ascribed to Indian Callatiae. The idea of primitive cannibalism (as seen e.g., in the legend of Cronus) still preserved on the fringes was much older than Herodotus: the first examples were the Laestrygonians and Cyclopes of Homer (Burkert (1990) 9).

In the sphere of family life, marriage in Greece was conducted according to elaborate rules involving the families in question and defining rights and duties. Among the nomads marriage was a simple affair, but still easily recognized as the institution of marriage, while the savages generally lived in a primitive state of promiscuity. Thus the Massagetae (1.216) have marriage, but they hold their wives in common and the simple rule of hanging a quiver on the front of a wagon shows that the other men are supposed to keep away. The Libyan Nasamones have a similar custom (4.172), and the Scythian Agathyrsi strengthen their brotherhood with common wives (4.104). The Libyan Adyrmachidae practise the *ius primae noctis* (4.168). Among

the Libyan Gindanes, a woman is esteemed according to how many lovers she has had (4.176) and the Machlyes (or Auses) have no marriage at all, but casual intercourse like animals (4.180). The most distant Indian tribes, too, have intercourse in public (3.101), and the same is stated about the inhabitants of the Caucasus (1.203).

The basis of life in Greece was agriculture and accordingly, the basis of the diet were its products: bread and wine. The nomads wandered around with their animals, eating meat and drinking milk.[6] In the case of the savages there were two differing views. On the one hand they still enjoyed the primeval, Golden Age fertility of nature, which gave its fruits without any need to work. On the other hand, being savages, they did not know how to prepare food, but ate raw meat, including human, and uncooked fruits and vegetables. Even the Massagetae and Issedones, who hold an intermediate position—they do not sow, but live on meat and fish and milk—slaughter their elderly relatives and eat them (1.216, 4.26). The nomadic Scythians do not till and sow (4.19), and the Thyssagetae and Iyrcae live by hunting (4.22). The Libyan Nasamones are nomads and eat wild dates and locusts (4.172). The Libyans in general are nomads who eat meat and drink milk (4.186). The Indian Padaei (3.99) eat raw meat and practise cannibalism, while their neighbours do not sow or hunt, but eat a kind of wild cereal (3.100). A third tribe is content with raw fish (3.98). The Scythian Argippaei live on the fruits of the tree called ponticum (4.23) and the Libyan Lotophagi on the lotus fruit (4.177). Beyond a Scythian desert live the man-eating Androphagi (4.18, 106). The Garamantes hunt in four-horse chariots the savage Troglodytes, who themselves eat snakes and lizards (4.183). In one case Herodotus himself rationalizes away the primitive way of feeding. The long-lived Ethiopians (3.18) eat every day from the table of the sun, believing that it is every night filled by the earth itself, but Herodotus suggests that it is secretly replenished by magistrates.

Rossellini and Saïd ((1978) 962) point out that these food differences are also seen in the subsequent stages of Cambyses' ill-fated Ethiopian

[6] A parallel to the Herodotean nomads in later sources are the primitive fish-eating Ichthyophagi on the coasts of the Red Sea and the Arabian Sea. Such tribes were also mentioned in passing by Herodotus, e.g., in 1.200 (preparing fish for eating), 1.202 and 3.98 (eating raw fish), and 5.16 (Thracian lake-dwellers). The very name Ichthyophagi is mentioned in 3.19 ff.

expedition (3.25). When the ordinary food had been eaten, the soldiers first ate their pack animals, then some wild vegetables, and in the end even some of their own companions selected by lot. While this can be seen as a natural 'progression' in a situation of extreme famine, it corresponds to the growing 'barbarization' of food habits noted above. In this way the theme of cannibalism is even introduced in Ethiopia, though the Ethiopians themselves are ordinary meat-eaters (3.18).

The Greeks and other peoples of the central region lived in houses, while the nomads with their wandering way of life were content with tents or covered wagons, but the savages just lay down under trees and slept. Thus the Massagetae (1.216 briefly) lived in wagons. The Scythians in general, as horse nomads, also lived in wagons (4.46). In the north of Scythia, the bald-headed Argippaei lived under trees, which in winter were protected with felt (4.23). An Indian people has no houses (3.100). A Libyan tribe in a rainless country builds huts of salt-blocks (4.185), while other Libyans have portable huts of twisted reeds (4.190).

There are some possible further variables involved, though not so clearly indicated by Herodotus. Rossellini and Saïd ((1978) 979 ff.) discuss the inversion of sexes. Another element is the form of government. In Greece, the government is defined by elaborate written laws, while the nomads have tribal societies with a simple monarchy and few laws. The savages either live in a state of anarchy or have an extremely simple leadership. The long-lived Ethiopians choose as their king the man who seems to be the tallest and strongest among them (3.20).[7] The Thracians, being the most numerous people after the Indians, would also be the most powerful nation if they could put away their tribal divisions and be united under a single ruler (5.3). In the same way the Libyan and Scythian nomads are divided into many tribes. Internal division, however, is not restricted to primitive peoples; Herodotus also mentions it as a major handicap of the Greeks in the face of Persian invasion.[8]

The double idea of the fringes being primitive but also still enjoying the conditions of the Golden Age resulted in a twofold conception of the people living there. On the one hand they were savages

[7] In the literature on Alexander it was claimed that the Indian Cathaei choose as their king the most handsome man among them (Onesicritus F 21).

[8] See further above, Ch. 15, pp. 335, 340–3, and below, Ch. 24, pp. 566–9.

practising cannibalism (cf. Rankin (1969)), on the other hand they were just and peaceful, 'noble savages'. An early example (in the *Odyssey*) are the godless man-eating Cyclopes and the peaceful Phaeacians who honour Poseidon. Rossellini and Saïd explain the second type as a primitive kind of righteousness, originating in nature rather than in higher moral ideas. Therefore, this righteousness is often mentioned as a simple statement quite unrelated to the account of local *nomoi*. To kill nothing living (the Indian people in 3.100 and the Libyan Atlantes in 4.184) is both righteous and primitive. The Scythian Argippaei have no weapons and are asked by their neighbours to act as peacemakers (4.23). The Garamantes of southern Libya avoid all contact with other people and have no weapons of war (4.174). Even the Issedones who eat their parents are characterized as just (4.26). The long-lived Ethiopians and their moral condemnation of Persian customs are a major example of the relativity of manners (3.21f., cf. Romm (1992) 53 ff.).

An important part of the conception of the fringes, especially in warm climates, is the immense fertility of nature and its many marvels.[9] Therefore, the primitive fringe-dwellers were able to survive without work, as nature gave its gifts freely to them.[10] The most famous examples of the exceptional riches of the fringes are perhaps the gold of India (3.94, 98, 102 ff., 106) and the aromatics of Arabia (3.106, 107 ff.). As befits the Golden Age conditions, gold seems to be common everywhere on the fringes: in Libya (4.195), in Ethiopia (3.114), in India (3.106), and in Scythia (3.116). In India animals and birds are much larger than elsewhere and wild trees yield cotton (3.106). The long-lived Ethiopians reach the age of 120 years and sometimes even more (3.23). They are said to be the tallest, best-looking, and longest-living people (3.114). The Libyans are the healthiest of all men (2.77 and 4.187). Southernmost Libya abounds with fantastic animals and wild tribes (4.191). Herodotus and his contemporaries took it for granted that this extraordinary fertility of nature with its marvels was something that existed on the fringes. Attempts at a scientific explanation came only with the Hippocratic *Airs, Waters, Places* and Hellenistic ethnography (see Dihle (1962a)).

[9] The classic study on this is Dihle (1962). See further Rossellini and Saïd (1978) 963 ff., and Romm (1992) 38 f.

[10] An early example is the island of the Cyclopes in the *Odyssey* 9.106 ff. The Cyclopes do not till and sow, but the soil by itself produces wheat and barley and grapes.

A further common feature of the fringes are deserts as boundaries between nomads and savages or as the outer boundary of the world (Edelmann (1970), also Romm (1992) 35 ff.). This is easy to understand as it is generalized from real examples. There really is the vastness of the Sahara to the south of civilized Libya (2.32 and 4.185), and also south and west of Egypt (2.25–6). In the same way, the Arabian desert (3.4–7, 9) most certainly exists. The desert east of India (3.98, and 4.40) can perhaps be identified as the Thar desert of western Rajasthan—India being mostly the Indus Valley—but it is also exactly where a desert is supposed to be. The desert where the gold-digging ants live (3.102) points rather to Central Asia. For Herodotus, deserts were found everywhere on the fringes. Thus Scythia, too, is bounded by deserts. Beyond the Neuri in the northwest there is an uninhabited desert (4.17). On the eastern side of the Borysthenes (Dnieper) the Androphagi, themselves living beyond a desert, are the northernmost people, beyond whom there is only desert (4.18). Further to the east, beyond the Melanchlaeni there is again an uninhabited desert (4.20). The rugged and stony country beyond the Budini also seems to be desert (4.23), and another Scythian desert is mentioned at 4.53 and 4.123 f. In Europe, the country beyond Thracia and the Ister is desert (5.9). To these may be added the uninhabitable winter wastes of the extreme north (4.31).

In addition to deserts, high mountains are occasionally met as boundaries. Southernmost Libya is mountainous (4.191). Cinnamon is obtained by Arabians from high mountains situated in the land where Dionysus grew up (3.111). Insurmountable mountains separate the Scythian Argippeans from the far north (4.25). It is somewhat surprising that Herodotus mentions no mountains in India, though they were reported already by Scylax and had an important place in the Indica of Ctesias.

My own contribution to the ethnography of the fringes is to have noted the theme of the expedition to the end of the world (Karttunen (1988)). The fringe-dwellers are often too primitive to exploit effectively the riches of their countries, which are coveted by their more civilized neighbours. There are many examples of expeditions made to exploit these riches. The Indians went with camels to fetch ant-gold (3.102 ff.) and the Arimaspians fetched gold from the griffins (3.116, 4.13, 427).[11] The Arabians face dangers and difficulties to obtain

[11] In Ctesias, too, the griffin-gold is obtained by a long expedition.

libanotus, cassia, and cinnamon (3.107, 110f.). The Libyan Nasamones make a summer expedition to the oasis of Augila (4.172, 182). Gold is found on an island in western Libya (4.195). A special case is the ill-fated Ethiopian expedition of Cambyses (3.25). In one instance, the fringe-dwellers visit the centre: the Hyperboreans' coming to Delos (4.33 ff.). A kind of unrealized expedition was perhaps the Ionian plan to colonize Sardinia (1.170). In many cases these expeditions are annual and can be connected with the yearly wanderings of many nomadic peoples, but they also have a definite background in Greek tradition, with the travels of Heracles, Jason, Odysseus, and Aristeas of Proconnesus. The passage to the fringes is achieved through deserts or mountains, or on the sea adrift in a storm, and the riches beyond are often guarded by dangerous beasts or savages.

While the undeniable outcome of all this is that Herodotus was putting his material on the Procrustean bed of his theoretical framework, it is no less true that he was industriously collecting information. Though analogous to each other, the fringes were to his mind by no means identical. The pattern is there, but it is at least partly founded on observation, as in the case of the movable homes of the nomads; the pattern guided the account, not necessarily to invention, but to rational selection. What was seen to be compatible with the pattern was simply found more relevant than deviations.

The Extremes: the Ethiopian South

Herodotus' account of Ethiopia is found in 3.17–25 (with further notes in 2.29 and 3.114). In this particular area he could rely on very old traditions in Greek literature,[12] though he attempted to maintain a critical distance from his predecessors. Thus, the common confusion between Ethiopia and India, starting before him and lasting into late antiquity, is not really seen in Herodotus (cf. Karttunen (1989) 134 ff.). Its beginnings lay with Homer and his account of the two kinds of Ethiopians. Herodotus' Eastern Ethiopians (3.94, 7.70), living somewhere in Makran or Baluchistan, were certainly no longer the same people as the Eastern Ethiopians of Homer (*Odyssey*

[12] The word Aithiops was already known in the Mycenaean period (see Dihle (1994) 8 f.) and used as an ethnic name since Homer.

1.22 ff., cf. Lesky (1959) 29 ff.). In later times, with the widening world-view, these Eastern Ethiopians were moved still further to the east (to Southeast Asia). Probably the black skin was a sufficient ground for identification; Herodotus himself knew that the Eastern Ethiopians were straight-haired, while the Southern had curly hair (7.70). Their languages were different, too.

Ethiopia itself, the country south of Egypt, was familiar from myth and legend, but was passed over by Herodotus in relatively few words. It is evident that the Ethiopians, as their name (*aithi-ops*) indicates, were black-skinned, a feature commonly explained by the nearness of the sun, but this is not mentioned by Herodotus (but see 3.101 on an Indian tribe). The question of the Hypernotii is briefly mentioned (4.36), but the parallelism between the extreme north and south already met in archaic poetry is not elaborated by Herodotus. Ethiopia contained both the intermediate region and the fringes. Those living near the Egyptian border were vassals of the Achaemenids, sending rich presents to Darius (3.97) and serving in Xerxes' invasion army (7.69 f.). They include the nomadic Ethiopians and perhaps also the inhabitants of the city of Meroe (2.29).

Some old motifs appear on the fringes. The table of the Sun (3.18) probably belongs to the same tradition as the Homeric account, where the gods all go to partake of a feast in Ethiopia.[13] In the archaic world, the physical presence of gods was one of the Golden Age features of the fringes. In a world no longer archaic, Herodotus ignored the gods and offered a rational solution for the appearance of food on the table, but the table was popular enough for him to make a special point of representing Cambyses seeking the truth about it.

As true fringe-dwellers, the Ethiopian Troglodytes (4.183) have no language, but squeak like bats. They were already mentioned in a fragment of Hecataeus and became very popular in later literature on Ethiopia. Another old and popular motif, the Pygmies and their war against cranes, was completely ignored by Herodotus.[14]

[13] *Iliad* 1.423 f., cf. Lesky (1959) 27 ff.
[14] See *Iliad* 3.3 ff., and Karttunen (1989) 128 ff.

The Extremes: the Libyan Southwest

Extreme Libya is described by Herodotus in 4.181–96 as part of the general account of Libya (4.145–205), which includes all three regions, starting with the civilized coastal region with Greek colonies, then dealing with the many tribes of nomads living north of the Sahara, and in the end returning to the history. There is a further account of the exploration (circumnavigation) of Africa in 4.42 f., and the Nasamones with their Saharan exploration are dealt with in 2.32 f.[15]

In a comprehensive sense, Libya was the name of the African continent, including Egypt in the northeast and Ethiopia in the southeast, but the main account concentrates on lands to the west of these regions. However, a connection between Libya proper and Ethiopia was maintained. The Nile was supposed to be flowing from Libya to Ethiopia (2.33), though its western course was probably the Niger seen by the Nasamones.[16] In addition to the fringe features mentioned above, the Libyan Atarantes have no individual names (4.184). In 4.191 Herodotus summarizes his account of the Libyan fringes with an uncharacteristic list, perhaps going back to Hecataeus, mentioning a number of Libyan marvels without elaborating on them at all (cf. Romm (1992) 91 f.).

The Extremes: the Arabian Southeast

Arabia as a country on the fringes is discussed in Herodotus 3.107–13, while the Asian exploration account in 4.44 does not say much about Arabia. It seems that there was no traveller's account available for Arabia, as there is no geography and the bulk of the description is a fantastic account of nature and the way of obtaining the precious aromatics for which Arabia was then already famous. In the time of Darius frankincense was sent as a gift to Persia (3.97) and the invasion army of Xerxes contained Arabian camel riders (7.86).

[15] For a more detailed discussion and further references see Lloyd (1990), who claims that as a whole the Libyan *logos* stands up well to scrutiny, though there is some exaggeration and over-simplification (237 f.). For his arguments against the historicity of the circumnavigation of Africa, see p. 251. See also Romm (1992) 49 ff.

[16] The question of the sources of the Nile fascinated many later authors, too. See Romm (1992) 149 ff.

It has been suggested that while parts of Arabia (and India) had been subject to Darius, this was long ago, and by Herodotus' time both countries had completely returned to being parts of the legendary fringes (Dihle (1990) 45). Or so it seemed to Herodotus and the Greeks. The Persians managed to keep some contact with both countries. Ctesias saw an Indian embassy bringing gifts to the Achaemenid court. Darius Codomannus was still able to use some Indian troops and a few Indian elephants against Alexander (Arrian, *Anabasis* 3.8) and the Achaemenid commandant of Gaza had Arabian mercenaries (Arrian, *Anabasis* 2.25.4).

Arabia is a large area, containing both familiar and distant parts. Dihle has pointed out that the occasional notes on northern Arabia in Herodotus (1.131, 198; 2.30, 141; 3.4, 7–9, 88, 97) are more realistic than the account of the aromatics country. However, this seems to be a reflection of different sources; to Herodotus himself, Arabia was a single whole. In 3.107–13 Arabia is a true part of the fringes. The first instance of the cinnamon bird topos, the story of a giant bird building its nest of cinnamon sticks, is found here (3.111). Later it is found in a different form in Aristotle and then in many other authors, and also in Indian and Islamic literature.

For Herodotus, Arabia was the country of snakes. The winged snakes of Arabia (3.107, cf. 2.75) were later described as living in India.[17] Originally, the story was perhaps founded on an observation of migrating locusts. There are perhaps more arthropods involved: it is not true for snakes that the female eats the male immediately after copulation (3.109), but such behaviour is observed among some spiders, scorpions, and mantoids.

The account of the fat-tailed sheep (3.113) is again founded on a true account, but exaggerated in a way suited to the fringes. The race itself is ancient: fat-tailed sheep were depicted both in Sumerian art and in Central Arabian rock engravings (perhaps a different breed). In Ctesias the same sheep (plus similar goats) are found in India (Karttunen (1989) 167 f.).

[17] Megasthenes F 21, cf. Karttunen (1997) 280 f.

The Extremes: the Indian East

The Herodotean account of India is found at 3.98–106 (with additional notes in 3.38). India is the easternmost of all countries (4.40) and Indians the most numerous of all peoples (5.3). The exploration of Asia in 4.44 also starts from India. Indians (7.65 and 7.83) and their neighbours such as the Gandarae (7.66) and the Eastern Ethiopians (7.70) served in the army of Xerxes. A distinction between the near India ruled by the Achaemenids and the distant India beyond it is noted (3.101), but not maintained. It is likely that India, although partly familiar to his sources, was to Herodotus himself entirely a part of the fringes. As on other fringes, the fact that some of the marvels were originally founded on a true account made them no less marvels.

The Indian gold, though accompanied by fabulous tales, was real (but evidently not as abundant as claimed by Herodotus in 3.94). Even the name 'ant-gold' is found in Indian sources. I have shown elsewhere that the ant-gold was probably related to the Scythian account of griffin-gold (see below), both going back to Central Asian legends.[18]

The vegetarian tribe in 3.100 is hardly an account of Indian ascetics, though often presented as such, but of savages (Karttunen (1989) 125 n. 26). Another vegetarian tribe in Herodotus are the Libyan Atlantes (4.184), also a people living on or near the fringes. But while Herodotus introduced a number of Indian marvels to Greek literature, he was silent about the fabulous peoples apparently mentioned by Scylax (known to Herodotus in 4.44) and then a common part of mythic India in classical literature (see Karttunen (1989) 127 ff.).

The Extremes: the European Northwest

In 3.115 f. Herodotus briefly mentions the European northwest among the fringes.[19] Stories and sources were available, but Herodotus deemed them untrustworthy. He briefly stated his suspicion as to

[18] Karttunen (1989) 171 ff. Indian sources for 'ant-gold': *Mahābhārata* 2.48.4, *Manorathapūraṇī* 2.239.21.

[19] All geographical and ethnographical material on Europe (other than Greece) in Herodotus is listed and discussed by Nenci (1990).

whether the north-flowing river Eridanus (as the source of amber, by others variously identified as the Rhone or the Po) and the fabulous Tin Islands (Cassiterides, probably the British Isles) actually existed, though he knew that both amber and tin arrived from somewhere on the European fringes. In 4.45 he repeats his ignorance concerning the distant parts of Europe. The sources and the course of the Ister (Danube) are briefly discussed in 2.33 (and again in 4.48 f.). The question of whether Europe is circled by the Ocean, is emphatically left open, as something concerning which reliable information (as opposed to poetry) is not available (3.115 and 4.45). Herodotus did not believe the Thracian claim that the lands beyond the Ister are impenetrable because of numerous bees; rather, it was due to the cold (5.10).

However, a lack of information is not sufficient explanation for the sceptical taciturnity of Herodotus. The information available for India and Arabia, for instance, was certainly not much better or more reliable than that about the European fringes. In many passages Herodotus was willing to give a lengthy account, though he himself deemed the matter rather untrustworthy. The flourishing Greek colonies—themselves quite familiar to and often mentioned by Herodotus (Nenci (1990) 304)—certainly had information about distant parts of Europe. In 1.163 an actual reference to the explorations by the Phocaeans is made. But for Herodotus the focus of the history lay in the east and his many excursuses on individual countries and peoples were inserted when they became involved with the main history, with the growth of the Persian empire. In this schema, the European *eskhatiai* had no place at all.

With the help of the Thracian excursus (5.3–10), it is possible to see the common threefold pattern in Europe, too. The Black Sea coast with Greek colonies belongs to the centre, while the inland Thracians represent the intermediate stage, and the fringes spread out beyond the Ister. Thracians are no nomads, true, but they despise agricultural labour (5.6), practise premarital prostitution (5.6), have only a few gods (5.7) and entertain curious notions about death (5.4).[20] The lake-dwellers (5.16) with their curious villages and one-sided diet of fish are already close to the fringes. The real fringes start beyond the Ister. The only Trans-Istrian people known to Herodotus

[20] The same custom is also ascribed to Lydians (1.93, cf. also 1.199 on Babylonian sacred prostitution).

are the Sigynnae, who have Median-style dress and small, long-haired horses. Their area extends almost to that of the Eneti, i.e., Veneti on the Adriatic (5.9).[21] In another passage (1.196) it is stated that the Veneti practise an auction of brides similar to that in Babylonia.

The Extremes: the Scythian Northeast

The main account of extreme Scythia is found in Herodotus 4.25–36 (inserted in the general account of Scythia in 4.1–143).[22] A parallel to this is the account of the Massagetae in 1.201–16. They live in the east beyond the river Araxes, opposite to the Issedones (1.201), whom they much resemble in customs. Like Libya, Scythia contains all three regions: Greek colonies and agriculture near the Black Sea, the intermediate nomads, and the savages of the fringe. A clear distinction is made between agricultural Scythians and nomadic Scythians, while some of the fringe-dwellers are specially said to be non-Scythian. There is no clear boundary between more western Europe and Scythia, which as a whole is included in Europe. Herodotus actually counts the Ister as the westernmost of Scythian rivers (4.51).

The Issedones (4.26) are located in the distant northeast. Beyond them were the one-eyed Arimaspians and the gold-guarding griffins (4.13 and 27), which Ctesias puts in a place reached by an expedition from India or Bactria. In 3.116 Herodotus locates the Arimaspians and the gold-guarding griffins in northern Europe, but is seems that his Europe extended north of Asia. In this he was certainly better informed than many later authors, knowing that the Caspian was an inland sea (1.202 f.) and not an inlet of the Northern Ocean. Much later, in the *Geography* of Ptolemy (6.16.5), the Issedones are found in Central Asia. As noted above, the griffins may go back to a Central Asian story (Karttunen (1989) 177 ff.). In India, Herodotus swallowed the story of the gold-digging ants; here he doubts the existence of the one-eyed Arimaspians and gold-guarding griffins, but admits that the gold is real. Despite his criticism, however, Herodotus has taken enough from the *Arimaspeia* to give us some idea of this lost work and of its author, Aristeas of Proconnesus.[23]

[21] On the Sigynnae see Nenci (1990) 312 ff.

[22] See in more detail above, Ch. 19; also Romm (1992) 45 ff. For the passages dealing with Scythian history, see Harmatta (1990) 122 ff.

[23] In addition to the classic monograph by Bolton (1962) see Romm (1992) 69 ff.

In the north the bald-headed Argippaei are the last known people, beyond them there are tales of goat-footed people and, still further in the north, of men who sleep for six months of the year (4.25). This is not true, but the period of six months does correspond to the sunless wintertime in the extreme north. Then follows an account of the winter in Scythia (4.28).[24] The fortunate Hyperboreans (4.32–36, cf. Romm (1992) 60 ff.) are at the same time fringe-dwellers and a part of Greek tradition. According to Aristeas, they lived beyond the Arimaspians (4.14). They were early presented as inhabiting a distant utopia, but this aspect is deliberately suppressed by Herodotus, who is content to discuss such accounts which to him seem most like history.

Before and after Herodotus

It was customary in Greek literature in the times of Herodotus (and long afterwards) to start everything with Homer and always take the possible Homeric evidence into account.[25] For Herodotus, however, Homer was no source for the fringes, though he is occasionally mentioned and accepted as a source of history. According to Herodotus, Homer and other archaic poets were inventing things and then presenting them as true, as in the cases of the river Oceanus (2.23) and the Hyperboreans (4.32). The mysterious epic of Aristeas of Proconnesus, the *Arimaspeia*, was used (4.13 ff.) as the only source for the far Scythian fringes, though with much scepticism. Often his criticism seems to include the *Periegesis* of Hecataeus of Miletus, although this is not clearly stated.

The name of Hecataeus[26] is actually mentioned only a few times by Herodotus, but there is hardly any doubt that the *Periegesis* was much used in ethnographical passages. Since it was not customary to name one's sources save in a few cases of criticism, 'the Ionians say' probably refers to Hecataeus. There was a time when scholars were keen to see everything in Herodotus as derived from earlier written sources (see e.g., Reese (1914)), but how could an experienced

[24] The continental climate makes winter rather hard even in Southern Russia. This was known early to the Greeks: see the Cimmerian passage in the *Odyssey* 11.13 ff.

[25] See, e.g., the long discussions of Homeric geography in the first book of Strabo.

[26] His relation to Herodotus is fully discussed in Karttunen (1989) 65 ff. and again by Dihle (1994) 24 ff. Jacoby (1913) 392 ff. is also still worth reading.

traveller and collector of information such as Herodotus have kept himself from adding to these? According to Lloyd, the geographical and ethnographical parts of the Libyan account more or less followed the lines laid by Hecataeus, but Herodotus also used other sources, often oral, and applied his own reason to all (Lloyd (1990) 239 f.). The same is probably true for other fringes. Hecataeus was important, but Herodotus searched for other information, too, and kept a critical distance from his predecessor. The unquestionable fragments of Hecataeus (most easily found in the edition of Nenci) are so terse and uninformative that without the hypothesis that Herodotus uncritically compiled from him (and he *was* critical), our idea of the *Periegesis* remains poor.

In later times Herodotus was given the undeserved stamp of being a liar. Nevertheless, as Murray (1972) showed, he was much read, especially in the early Hellenistic period. Aristotle criticized but also used him often. Ephorus and Theopompus owed much to him. There are many examples relating to less remote parts of the world (e.g., in the descriptions of Egypt), but where the fringes are concerned, too, his influence is conspicuous. Nearchus (F 8) and Megasthenes (F 23) knew the gold-digging ants of India and Nearchus even claimed to have seen their skins. There are further Herodotean elements in Nearchus (Murray (1972) 205 f.). When Herodotus said that the inhabitants of the Caucasus west of the Caspian had intercourse in public like animals (1.203), Megasthenes said the same in a passage probably dealing with the Indian Caucasus, i.e., the Hindukush (F 27b). The description of Arabia in Arrian (*Anabasis* 7.20) uses Herodotus. However, there is danger in reconstructing literary reminiscenses on the basis of only a single point. Were there not several independent accounts of Indian widows dying with their dead husbands and even competing for this honour—and strong parallel evidence in Indian sources—it would be easy to claim that the account was founded on the Herodotean passage describing a similar custom in Thrace (5.5).

Herodotus was not only the father of history, but also the father of ethnography. While his predecessors remained shadowy figures rarely quoted or even mentioned, Herodotus' own work became the model for future generations describing distant lands.[27]

[27] Margot Whiting has kindly checked and corrected my English.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

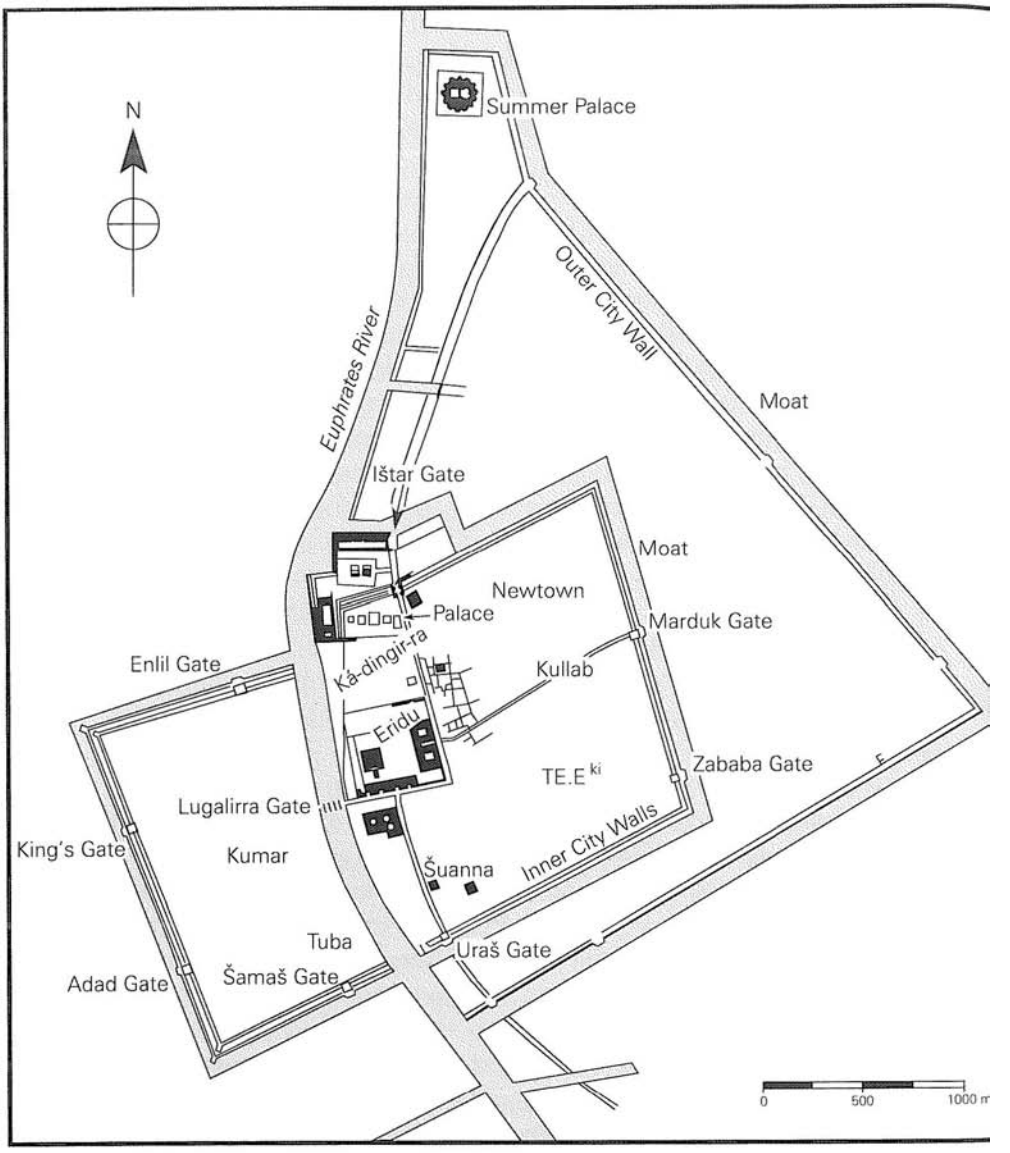
BABYLON

Amélie Kuhrt

Introduction

Herodotus composed his work after the middle of the fifth century BC, by which time Babylonia had been part of the Achaemenid empire for nearly a hundred years. In his description of the country, centred on the city of Babylon, he evokes the shortlived Neo-Babylonian imperial period (626–539 BC), preceding Persian rule (1.178–86), in order to set the scene for Cyrus' conquest in 539 (1.189–91). This is followed by a rapid and highly selective survey of Babylonia's resources and customs (1.192–200). Only very occasionally does Herodotus remark on changes that have taken place in Babylonia as a result of Persian rule (e.g., 1.196.5).

What picture of Babylon and Babylonians do we take away from Herodotus? First, Babylon was an Assyrian city, the greatest after the fall of Nineveh. It was perfectly square, bisected by the Euphrates, with the palace in the western half, temples in the eastern half. The massive walls, surmounted by small buildings and broad enough to accommodate a four-horse chariot, enclosed an area more than 91 km. in circumference. They were protected by a moat and pierced by a hundred bronze gates. For construction, mudbricks and locally available bitumen were used; large buildings were strengthened with reed-mats layered between the courses. There were two temples: one was an eight-staged tower; ascent was by a spiral stair to reach a shrine at the top where, according to the 'Chaldaeans', a divinely chosen woman was visited by the god Bel (i.e., the Babylonian god Marduk)—a similar custom being known in Egyptian Thebes and Lycia. The second temple was lower and contained a gigantic gold cult-statue of Zeus (by which Herodotus probably means Bel); outside were massive altars for sacrifice, and there had been another statue here, of a man, plundered by Xerxes.



Babylon. Adapted from J. Goodnick Westenholz (ed.), *Royal Cities of the Biblical World* (Jerusalem 1996), 196 fig. 1.

Herodotus then turns to Babylon's history: Semiramis, a queen who lived perhaps three hundred years earlier, had built a system of dykes to control the river. But it was another queen, Nitocris (150 years before Herodotus), who did some of the most impressive work—diverting the Euphrates to stem its flow and construct massive quay walls, and building a bridge to link the two halves of the city. She was buried in a tomb set over one of Babylon's gates; its inscription promised money to future Babylonian kings in need, if they opened it. The Persian king Darius I (522–486) eventually did so, mainly because he wanted to be able to use the gate; all he found inside was a scornful note condemning his greed. It was Nitocris' son, Labynetos, who fought against Cyrus.[1] First he was successful, then defeated. Babylon was placed under siege, which dragged on because the city was so well provisioned and fortified. Eventually, Cyrus diverted the Euphrates to allow his army to enter the city; the Babylonians did not notice the fall of their city because it was so huge and they were all celebrating a festival at the other end.[2]

After that we get a thumbnail sketch of the irrigation system, Babylonia's extraordinary fertility, the cultivation of the date palm and the use of sesame oil. Next comes a curious tale of circular boats, travelling regularly down the Tigris from Armenia with cargoes of wine and donkeys as ballast; they were dismantled after delivery, packed on the backs of the donkeys and taken back to Armenia overland. Then we hear a bit about Babylonian dress, a laudable system of auctioning marriageable girls in order to provide dowries for all (a practice that has 'now' ceased, with the poor prostituting their daughters), treatment of the ill in the public square, burial, married sex, and a ritual by which all women must, once in their lifetime, have sex with a stranger—a custom also known in Cyprus. With a short remark about the fact that three Babylonian tribes eat

[1] Earlier on, another Labynetos appears as mediator resolving the conflict between Cyaxares and Alyattes on the Halys (1.74). Herodotus digresses here to mention the Persian king's practice of having water from the Choaspes transported for his consumption when on the move (1.188; cf. Briant (1994)). He also describes Cyrus dividing the Gyndes river into channels as punishment for drowning one of the sacred white horses, before moving to Babylon.

[2] Herodotus says that this was the first time Babylon was taken, pointing forward to his elaborate tale, 'The ruse of Zopyrus', when Babylon fell to Darius I (3.150–60). He continues with a description of Babylonian contributions to the satrapal and royal coffers, over and above the regular tribute. At 3.92, he lists its annual tribute as 1,000 talents of silver and 500 boys to be made into eunuchs.

nothing but dried fish, pounded up and made into cakes or bread, Herodotus moves on to Cyrus' campaign in Central Asia where he was killed.

Archaeological investigation has recovered texts and building remains, which allow us to look at Babylonia from the inside, as it were, and compare the emerging picture of its history and society with Herodotus' sketch. That raises questions about Herodotus' focus, sources, and conceptual structuring of the world. To try and clarify this complicated interplay, I shall, after a discussion of Herodotus' sources, assess the evidence, sketch a picture of Babylonian history, society, and its great capital, Babylon, in the sixth and fifth centuries, as it appears from the Mesopotamian sources.

Herodotus' sources

How did Herodotus acquire his information? It has been plausibly argued that the manner in which he presents his work fits well with the philosophical and scientific modes of Ionian debate of the later fifth century (Thomas (2000)). Several passages suggest that Herodotus rehearsed at least part of his findings to a live, critical audience. In such a context, he needed to demonstrate the trustworthiness of his research (*historiē*). An obvious way to persuade his listeners of his reliability was to point to the fact that he had travelled to the relevant regions, seen things himself and spoken to the local inhabitants.

What does he say, or imply, about his sources of information on Babylonia? The anecdote of Nitocris' tomb (1.187) ends with the words: 'That is the kind of queen she is said to have been,' implying a story in general circulation. On three occasions, he refers to Chaldaean informants (1.181; 1.182; 1.183), 'who are priests of this god' (sc. Bel; 1.181.5). Although he reports 'what they say', he does not necessarily accept it uncritically. In one case (concerning the chastity of the woman who annually is visted by Bel), he emphasizes that he does not believe them (1.182); in another (description of a statue stolen by Xerxes, 1.183), that he only has their word for it and has not been able to verify it with his own eyes. A couple of times he refers to travelling to Babylonia, which could indicate that he has visited the country himself. However, both references are oblique. Thus, at 1.185, he simply says that 'those who travel from our sea to Babylonia', will see how the river bends around the vil-

lage of Ardericca as a result of Nitocris' water diversion. The second, famous statement is at 1.193, where he declines to say any more about the giant size of Babylonia's crops, 'because those who have never been to Babylon will not believe what I have already said'. For the rest, Herodotus remains unspecific. He picks out what he deems to be the most marvellous thing (*to thōma megiston*) in Babylonia (the round boats, 1.194), which he thinks is the best custom (*nomos*: the marriage market, 1.196) and which the worst (ritual prostitution, 1.199), and he remarks that several habits are practised elsewhere, too (1.182, 196, 198, 199). So, our impression on reading Herodotus' description is that he has been there, made informed comparisons, seen things, talked with the locals and heard their stories. So he is in a position to prove to his audience that what he says is true because he can vouch for it from personal experience—a type of argument crucial in contemporary debates (Thomas (2000) 200). But is that impression right?

First, who were the Chaldaean priests, from whom Herodotus garnered some of his information? A distinct element of Babylonia's population in the first half of the first millennium BC was labelled Chaldaean, although it is difficult to define precisely how they differed from the inhabitants of the old city-centres. We can only grasp their mode of existence very partially through the eyes of urban elites, when the two groups came into conflict. They seem to have been prosperous, divided into several groups deriving their identities from an eponymous ancestor, and their main settlements were concentrated in the marshy, extreme south of Iraq.[3] By the end of the seventh century, when the Neo-Babylonian empire came into existence, a large proportion of these groups seem to have been absorbed into the dominant fabric of Babylonia's political life. Many later classical writers, too, like Herodotus, refer to 'Chaldaeans' as cultic experts; alternatively, it comes to be a general designation for Babylonians.[4] But for Strabo (16.8) the Chaldaeans are still a people living in southern Babylonia around the Persian Gulf. So there is no unanimity about who they really were. What is certain is that no group of scholars or temple-personnel in Babylonia were ever called this in the surviving documentation from Mesopotamia.

[3] Brinkman (1968), (1984). For a discussion of the problems involved in defining Chaldeans, and a critique of the idea that they were 'tribal', see von Dassow (1999).

[4] Edzard (1975); Kuhrt (1982).

The second question concerns Herodotus' personal presence in Babylonia. There was certainly little to prevent him journeying within the Persian empire, so there is nothing inherently incredible in his conducting his inquiries on the spot. Many, nevertheless, question whether he did. The issue has been contentious ever since excavation in Babylonia showed that Herodotus' picture does not really tally with the surviving remains or texts (Boiy (2000) 81–2). This has led scholars to formulate a range of different approaches. A standard one for many years, and still going strong (e.g., Drews (1997)), has been to argue that the Babylon Herodotus saw had been devastated by the Persians, so that he was describing a city which had vanished—a view no longer sustainable (see below, pp. 488–90). To this we can add the widespread idea that Herodotus was the victim of 'oriental dragomans' (the 'Chaldaeans'), on whom he had to rely because he did not speak the language. They exaggerated and invented in order to impress the foreign traveller, who faithfully reported their absurd stories as fact—an approach which turns Herodotus into a naive fool. Some try to 'save' Herodotus by drawing up a balance sheet of things he gets right and the ones he gets wrong.[5] As some things are undoubtedly correct—such as the Euphrates flowing through Babylon, the bridge across it, irrigation channels, the existence of a ziggurat and lower temple, great walls, sesame, date-palms, mud-brick, etc.—the balance is in favour of Herodotus giving us a description which is broadly reliable.[6]

But it is precisely the fact that the broad strokes of the description get matters roughly right, while a multitude of details could not be more wrong, that raises the suspicion that Herodotus operated with an image of Babylon already familiar to his audience. This he elaborated to fit his overall conception of the world, which is marked by a strong sense of symmetry, by a vision whereby the further a place is from the Greek centre, the more expected norms (particularly gender roles, sex, burial) will be subverted, and by a dynamic interplay of 'soft' and 'hard' cultures, with Greece representing (at the moment) a perfect balance of the two, while Babylonia is an example of softness.[7] This creates the grid through which Herodotus

[5] E.g., MacGinnis (1986); cf. Dalley (1994).
[6] For detailed criticism of these approaches, see Rollinger (1993), (1998).
[7] Redfield (1985); Rosselini and Saïd (1978).

views his material and filters his perceptions; and it is this which determines the structuring of his material.[8]

Some scholars, moreover, have demonstrated that certain stories in the Babylonian *logos* come from a Greek milieu, such as the 'marriage-market' and the anecdote of Nitocris' tomb,[9] which suggests that Herodotus placed them here to startle his audience, by finding odd, albeit familiar elements in an exotic place. Conversely, when he says that he has seen, or been told by locals about, some particularly bizarre custom, he confirms the expectations of his listeners by such apparently reliable testimony from someone 'who has seen it for himself'. Taking such an approach would help to explain many of Herodotus' omissions, factual errors, and some of the peculiar practices imputed to Babylonia. It works particularly well with the 'sacred prostitution' episode, of which no real trace can be found in the dense Babylonian evidence. This was seen as a quintessentially 'eastern' practice (note that Herodotus says it was also practised in Cyprus), a perversion of regular, female behaviour, which helps to underscore Babylonia's otherness in contrast to normative Greek behaviour (Beard and Henderson (1997)).

None of this, of course, need mean that Herodotus did not visit Babylon, but it does suggest that, like many travellers, he is not necessarily a particularly reliable source of information,[10] as he is of necessity fitting what he may have seen and heard into an established framework of expectations and current knowledge. Such a view assumes, of course, that he drew on all kinds of stories and material about Babylonia already in circulation. Their existence should not surprise us: people from western Turkey worked in the palace at Babylon in the sixth century; soldiers from the Aegean fought for Neo-Babylonian kings and were rewarded; many people from the north-western edges of the Achaemenid empire were in the employ of the Persian royal family who owned extensive tracts of land in Babylonia; there are many reported instances of Greek embassies visiting the court at Susa, travelling along a road that touched northern Babylonia. In other words, there is a long history of diverse contact and interaction between the Greek and Babylonian worlds. What

[8] Gould (1989) 89; Bichler and Rollinger (2000) 29–31.

[9] MacNeal (1988); Dillery (1992).

[10] See, e.g., Dyson (1971), for a discussion of the odd reports by British travellers in India in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Herodotus did, brilliantly, was to structure this existing, albeit sketchy, knowledge in accordance with contemporary philosophical concepts and deploy it within a coherent system for understanding the world. In this creative effort, Babylon played a key role, foreshadowing that other, much more elaborately depicted, exemplar of 'softness', Egypt.[11]

The Babylonian sources

The written sources available for reconstructing Babylonia's history in the time of the Neo-Babylonian rulers and then under the Achaemenids are extensive and diverse, although their distribution is uneven in time and space. There are, first, a substantial number of royal inscriptions, commemorating the immense building programmes undertaken by Babylonian kings.[12] It is in the nature of these texts that they dwell at length on the royal piety reflected by such work; mentions of military and political events are exceptional. When they occur, they are highly biased in favour of the commissioning ruler, as one would expect.[13] The Persian kings, save Cyrus, are represented by very few, badly damaged inscriptions only. Despite these limitations, such texts illuminate Babylonian kingship ideals, which created a framework within which the defeated Babylonians and the victorious Persian king could reach an accommodation.[14]

A second important source is the Babylonian chronicles. In their original state, they presented a dispassionate, virtually year-by-year account of political events, as they affected Babylonia, from 744 into the late Seleucid period. But only a handful of fragments have survived, covering (in the timespan relevant for this book) the years 627–594, 557, 555–538, and even these tablets are badly damaged in places. Moreover, where legible, the chronicle information is frequently rather laconic.[15] Nevertheless, where the texts are usable, their information can be invaluable, as it seems to have been drawn from near-contemporary, neutral records. Additional information can be gleaned from king lists and notices in astronomical texts.[16]

[11] Redfield (1985) 109–12; Rollinger (1993) 182.
[12] Langdon (1912); Berger (1973).
[13] Cf. Beaulieu (1989); Kuhrt (1983), (1990c).
[14] Kuhrt (1983), (1990a) 180–1, (1987), (1990b); van der Spek (1983).
[15] Grayson (1975); Glassner (1993).
[16] Kuhrt (1990a) 179–80; Sachs and Hunger (1988); Stolper (1988); Walker (1997).

The bulk of documentation comes from the archives of temples in Sippar and Uruk. Their number is exceptionally large—tens of thousands, with many still awaiting publication. Chronologically they span, roughly, the period from the late seventh to the early fifth centuries.[17] Why the archives come to an end is debated; suggestions range from changes in administrative procedures to the increasing use of Aramaic, widely used by the Achaemenid regime and written on perishable materials such as parchment. It is also worthwhile remembering that the mass of documentation surviving from sixth century Babylonia is unusual; only one other period in Mesopotamia's long history, 1500 years earlier, has left us such quantities (Joannès (1995), (1997)).

The downside of this wealth of material is that, while it affords us detailed insight into how these great institutions administered their properties and ran their staff and dependents, it tells us virtually nothing about the rest of the population, nor the central administration. About both of these crucial aspects, we are poorly informed. A set of documents, specifying rations to be given to people resident at, or working for, the palace in Babylon at the time of Nebuchadnezzar II (605–562), is the sole and tiny remnant of the immense Neo-Babylonian royal archives to have survived.[18] From the Persian period, texts relating to the business enterprises of a governor of Babylonia in the late fifth century have been found in the Babylon citadel; it seems that records of some private transactions, from approximately the same date, were also stored there.[19]

Numerous texts reflect the diverse activities of Babylonian families and individuals. They come from several sites, including Babylon,

[17] Many aspects of the rich Uruk archives (which seem to cease in the early years of Darius I) have been, and continue to be, studied, and more texts published (cf. Kessler (1991) for survey; for the end of the archive: van Driel (1998)). The most recent substantial studies (with bibliography) of the Sippar material, which comes to an end in the early years of Xerxes, are: Bongenaar (1997); Jursa (1995); MacGinnis (1995).

[18] Weidner (1939); cf. Pedersén (1998) 183–4. That they certainly did exist is clear from occasional references in other texts to directives received from the king, and by analogy with the enormous documentation surviving from the Assyrian state archives, now being published in full in the series *State Archives of Assyria*, Helsinki 1987–. So far, fifteen volumes of texts with translations have appeared, plus twelve books in the companion monograph series (*State Archives of Assyria Studies*). Discussions of Assyrian history and society linked to the project appear regularly in the biannual journal, *State Archives of Assyria Bulletin*.

[19] The archive of the governor, who, unusually, was a Babylonian appointed by the Persian regime, is being published and analysed by Stolper (1987), (1990), (1995).

and offer the opportunity to gain a clearer understanding of the socio-economic context. But there are problems in trying to reconstruct society and economy from such randomly preserved 'business files'.[20] Two collections are particularly important: several thousand tablets record the marriages, inheritances, purchases, leases, adoptions, loans and investments of five generations of the prominent Egibi family (602–482). They were resident in Babylon, but their commercial tentacles reached well beyond Babylonia's frontiers.[21] Over 700 texts attest the enterprises of the Murashu family 'firm' of Nippur in the second half of the fifth century. They managed agricultural land owned by high-ranking Persians, as well as 'fiefs' assigned by the administration to individuals (including foreign settlers) and institutions, in return for which the crown demanded services and/or tax.[22]

Finally, a considerable number of Babylonian literary and scholarly texts date from the sixth and fifth centuries, which show that the age-old traditions of Mesopotamian learning survived and were fostered in Babylonia's cities both in the Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid periods (Hunger (1968)). Among the most striking recent finds of such material are over 1,500 tablets found by Iraqi archaeologists in the Nabu *ša harê* temple in Babylon. The publication of selected items shows them to be extracts from the long-established corpus of Mesopotamian literature, used in the training of scholars (Cavigneaux (1981)). In 1985–6, a temple library with brick shelving, about half still containing neatly arranged tablets, was unearthed at Sippar. The library was certainly still functioning in the reign of Cambyses (530–522). So far, only a small selection of the 800 texts have been published, but reports of the find indicate that the library contained virtually the entire range of Mesopotamian literature and learning, including a collection of copies of earlier royal inscriptions, mathematical and astronomical texts.[23] Within this context of cultural continuity, there were also new developments, the most remarkable of which—in the field of astronomy—occurred when Babylonia was under Persian domination.[24]

[20] For survey of findspots and publications: Pedersén (1998) 186–9, 198–9, 203–4, 210–12.

[21] Cf. Pedersén (1998) 187–9, n. 73, for publications; add now Wunsch (2000).

[22] Cardascia (1951); Stolper (1985); Donbaz and Stolper (1997).

[23] For full references to reports, and publications, of the Sippar library, see Pedersén (1998) 197, n. 85.

[24] Sachs (1948), (1952); Rochberg-Halton (1984), (1991).

This is the material at our disposal for writing a history of political events and reconstructing the socio-economic framework. It is very hard to do more with it than describe the expansion of Babylonia, its fall to the Persians, the succession of kings, and some aspects of Babylonian society. There is no Babylonian Herodotus; no text recounts Babylonia's history in narrative form or discusses the social and political framework. In some respects, that is an advantage in that we do not have to cope with the distorting effects of literary structuring and idealized abstraction. On the other hand, the sources are fragmentary and uneven. The apparently objective chronicles highlight only select events. Random survival and incomplete excavation introduce their own distortions of which we have to beware in recreating Babylonia's history. Many aspects of Babylonian society will always remain obscure because they do not surface in the written or archaeological record.

Historical Outline

Babylonia was, from around 1500 BC onwards, the name of the territory stretching south from Baghdad to the Arab-Persian Gulf, its chief royal city and religious centre at Babylon. Before that, from the late fourth millennium on, the region had been one of competing city-states, with a highly developed, sophisticated, literate civilization, which later Babylonians inherited, guarded, and reshaped. To the north lay Assyria, centred on the modern cities of Mosul and Erbil, in Iraq. Despite strong links with the south, Assyria had quite distinctive political, linguistic and cultural characteristics. In the early second millennium, Assyria was no more than the modest, though commercially prosperous, city-state of Ashur on the Tigris.[25] But in the late fifteenth century, reacting to political pressures, it began to develop into a substantial expansionist power: in the west, it put much of the area east of the Euphrates under provincial control; in the south, it clashed repeatedly with Babylonia and dominated it briefly. Assyria's growth did not proceed unchallenged, and it underwent several periods of contraction and relative weakness. But, from the ninth century on, its kings launched repeated, far-reaching

[25] Larsen (1976); Veenhof (1995).

campaigns until, by the end of the eighth century, Assyria controlled, directly and indirectly, the entire territory from the Gulf to the Egyptian frontier, from southern Turkey to the foot hills leading to the Iranian plateau, including Babylonia.[26] But, in the 620s, the Babylonians revolted against the Assyrians, which eventually led to the establishment of the Neo-Babylonian empire, dominating the former Assyrian territory. It is undoubtedly the great, pervasive power of Assyria that led Herodotus to visualize it as the imperial predecessor of the Medes and Persians (1.95), and to think of Babylonia (rather uneasily, Kuhrt (1982)) as a part of Assyria.

In 626, a previously unknown Babylonian, Nabopolassar,[27] began a series of attacks on Assyria, which may have been already weakened by internal problems. Between 616 and 610/9, Nabopolassar fought the Assyrians beyond the confines of Babylonia; in this, he was supported by the Medes, living on and beyond the edges of the Assyrian empire in the east. The majority of Assyria's great royal cities fell to the allies during this period, although it was Nabopolassar who established solid political control over most of the former Assyrian centres.[28] By the time of his death in 605, Babylonian control extended into North Syria, west of the Euphrates. The rest of the Levant, as far as Egypt, was added by Nebuchadnezzar II, Nabopolassar's son, over the next twenty years. Nebuchadnezzar's son, Amel-Marduk, was deposed after a mere two years (562–560) by his brother-in-law, Neriglissar (560–556), who campaigned in Cilicia Aspera, along the Lydian frontier. When he died, his small son fell victim to a coup, which brought Nabonidus (556–539), unrelated to the royal family as far as we know, to the throne. Herodotus' Babylonian king, Labynetos, seems to be a rendering of Nabonidus' name, used by him, indeed, as a portmanteau name for all Babylonian kings (see above, n. 1). Some scholars have argued that Herodotus' Nitocris was, in fact, Nabonidus' long-lived mother, Adda-guppi (Röllig (1969)), although reduplication of the same-named Egyptian queen seems more likely (Kuhrt (1982)). After campaigns in Syria and Cilicia,

[26] Lanfranchi (2000) has argued that by the early seventh century some Greeks were settled as subjects inside the Assyrian empire.

[27] It is often assumed that Nabopolassar belonged to the powerful Chaldaean tribe, who lived in the extreme south of Iraq (see Brinkman (1968), (1984)), but this is debatable (Kuhrt (1995a) 621, n. 4).

[28] See the important evidence from ancient Dur Katlimmu, Kühne et al. (1993); cf. Kuhrt (1995b).

Nabonidus mounted a major expedition into the Arabian desert, where he set up a base at the great oasis of Teima, a nodal point in the rich, trans-Arabian caravan trade.

In September 539, Cyrus (II) of Persia, penetrated the Babylonian frontier. Persian and Babylonian armies met in a fierce battle at Opis, just east of the Tigris, in which the Babylonians were defeated. Cyrus followed up his victory by looting Opis and massacring the inhabitants. On 10 October, Sippar, on the Euphrates, surrendered and Cyrus waited there, while his forces invested Babylon to the south, which he entered, amidst a carefully orchestrated ceremony of public rejoicing, on 12 October. Nabonidus was taken prisoner and, according to a later Babylonian source, provided with the revenues of an estate in eastern Iran, which implies that he spent the remainder of his life as a pensioner of the Persian king.[29]

The Babylonian empire was undoubtedly the largest, most highly evolved and complex polity conquered by Cyrus. Strategically, it was hugely important, dominating all the routes running east to west and north to south. Without controlling this territory, the Persian empire could not have existed. Consolidating the Achaemenid hold was crucial, but we know very little about how it was achieved. There are some hints: first, it is clear that many members of the local elite, who had served the Neo-Babylonian kings, retained their posts, at least initially. They provided the essential know-how for the Persian rulers and mediated between the Babylonian population and the new regime. Yet their own position depended on showing the Persians that they could be trusted, so that they needed to demonstrate their unswerving devotion and make Persian interests their own. Another indicator of how important secure control of Babylonia was is the fact that, almost immediately after the conquest, Cyrus installed his crown-prince, Cambyses, as king of Babylonia. He seems to have presided over the great public ceremony of investiture in Babylon in person (Kuhrt (1997)), thus driving home the point that, while Cambyses might appear to be acting in the manner of a Babylonian ruler, the centre of power now lay elsewhere. For reasons we do not understand, Cambyses held the sub-kingship of Babylon for only one year. By 535, Cyrus had appointed the Persian Gobryas

[29] Full discussion of Mesopotamian history in Kuhrt (1995a) chs. 1–2, 7, 9, 11; details of Cyrus' conquest, Kuhrt (1983), (1988); Nabonidus provided with revenues, Briant (1985).

as governor of all the territories which had originally constituted the Neo-Babylonian empire. How such an immense province was actually managed we do not know; around the beginning of Xerxes' reign, it was divided into two separate satrapies, 'Babylonia' (including the territory of Assyria), and the province 'Beyond the River', i.e. the Levant, west of the Euphrates, to the Egyptian frontier (Stolper (1989)).

There is no hint in what we have of any resistance to the Persian take-over. The material at our disposal gives the impression that Babylonia remained tranquil throughout the rest of Cyrus' reign and that of his successor, Cambyses (530–522). Babylonians appear also to have accepted calmly the seizure of the Persian throne by Cambyses' younger brother, Bardiya (Herodotus' Smerdis), in the spring of 522 (Hdt. 3.61–79). But only four days after Darius' murder of Bardiya (late September 522), Babylonia rebelled under the leadership of a man claiming to be a son of Nabonidus, who assumed the programmatic name Nebuchadnezzar. But the revolt was short-lived: the rebels were defeated in two battles by Darius in mid-December, Babylon was taken, the ringleader and his supporters publicly executed. Although some scholars have expressed doubt (Rollinger (1998)), most accept Darius' statement that yet another Babylonian revolt broke out, under a leader laying claim to the same identity, in August 521, which was scotched by Darius' close associate, Intaphernes. The course of these revolts is described in Darius I's long inscription carved into the rockface at Behistun, justifying his seizure of the Persian throne. The only tangible reflection of them in Babylonia is that several documents are dated by the pretenders.[30]

Two more rebels are attested by Babylonian dated documents, but, apart from their names, we know nothing about them. The revolts were shortlived—not much more than two weeks and three months, respectively—and it is quite unclear when they took place. For many decades it has been assumed that they should be placed in Xerxes' second and fourth regnal years (484 and 482), but this was based on the misreading of a passage in Herodotus' description of a temple in Babylon (1.183), combined with a deep-seated idea that Xerxes was a psychologically unstable and sacrilegious despot

[30] The most important analyses of Darius' usurpation are Dandamaev (1976); Briant (1996) 109–39. For discussion of Herodotus' account of Darius' accession and its relationship to the Behistun inscription, see Balcer (1987).

derived from Greek literary sources, backed up by the attribution of a false significance to the titles applied to Persian kings in Babylonian documents. Let us examine this question more closely, as it is important to how we view the situation in Babylonia when Herodotus was writing.

The traditional argument, widely accepted, runs like this: at 1.183, Herodotus tells us that Xerxes removed the cult-statue of Bel-Marduk, chief god of the pantheon, from Babylon. Without this statue, the all-important New Year Festival, serving to legitimize Babylonian kings, could not be performed. The fact that Xerxes did indeed remove the statue, as punishment for Babylonia's two revolts, and so reduced its status, is shown by the fact that, until 482, he was always given the title 'king of Babylon, king of lands' in the date formulae of documents. But after 482 he only has the title 'king of lands', as do all his successors, which shows that the New Year Festival ceased with the removal of the cult-statue and Xerxes was no longer accepted by Babylonians as a legitimate ruler. The 'fact' of Xerxes' change of titulary also helps to date the Babylonian revolts to 484 and 482 respectively.

Every single point of this arguments fails to stand up to closer examination, beginning with the Herodotus passage itself. In his account of the main, lower temple of Babylon, he describes the immense, golden cult-statue (*agalma*) of Zeus (i.e., Bel-Marduk) as being in place well after Xerxes' death. He then mentions another golden statue of a man (*andrias*), outside the temple, which was removed by Xerxes, so that he has only heard about it from 'Chaldaeans'. The use of two different terms for the statues is significant,[31] and makes quite clear that, whatever Herodotus may have thought about Xerxes, he did not envisage him robbing Babylon's temple of its most important cult-image. There is, therefore, no reason to credit Xerxes with any disruption of important rituals in Babylon. A second point is that the New Year Festival did not function to legitimize kings. It *was* an important occasion, in which ideally the king participated, an occasion on which he displayed spoils from his conquests, made gifts to temples and obtained good omens for the following year, but he was not necessarily personally present and he did not cease to be accepted as king when he was unable to take

[31] Kuhrt and Sherwin-White (1987) 71–2; Briant (1998) 217–19, 224.

part. It could still be performed, albeit in a less spectacular fashion (Kuhrt (1987)). Moreover, we have no evidence that any of the Persian kings, apart from Cambyses as regent, after the conquest of Babylon in 538, ever performed this festival personally. It would have been, of course, impossible for Cambyses while in Egypt to do so, for example. Yet, all of Xerxes' predecessors have the title 'king of Babylon'. Clearly royal festival participation and legitimacy did not go hand in hand. Finally, the pattern of Xerxes' titles derived from business documents is no longer valid. More Babylonian documents from his reign have been published recently (see Rollinger (1999) for an up-to-date list). It is now quite plain that not only is he given the title 'king of Babylon' right through his reign, his successor, Artaxerxes I, also used it.[32] Admittedly, the title is used with decreasing frequency and eventually dropped altogether, but we should probably seek explanations for this in the fact that, as the empire developed and stabilized, it became an ever more integrated political unit, and emphasis on the discrete entities that constituted it became less signficant.

One result of this is that it leaves us without a way of dating the revolts; we cannot even be certain that they occurred in Xerxes' reign, although that is a possibility.[33] Another important point to note is that the destruction of the traditional argument suggests that no drastic changes or diminution of Babylonian cults were introduced by any of the Persian kings. That fits rather well with the textual material, which reflects the continuity of traditional temple activities (Stolper (1994)). Contrary to what is frequently asserted by archaeologists,[34] there is no evidence at Babylon of temple destructions datable to the Achaemenid period, even less to Xerxes (Rollinger (1993), (1998)).

[32] Rollinger (1998) stresses, rightly, that we do not know precisely which Artaxerxes had these titles (it could be either I, II or III). Attributing the documents (there are so far only three) to Artaxerxes I is based on the assumption that there is an evolution in the titulary.

[33] Briant (1992); Kuhrt (1997); Rollinger (1998).

[34] Haerinck (1990), (1997); Schmid (1981), (1995).

Babylon

The city of Babylon rose to prominence in the reign of Hammurabi (1792–1750 BC); it was an important cultic centre subsequently under the Kassites (*c.* 1550–1155). Its role as the prime ceremonial and royal capital grew as its chief god, Bel-Marduk, became head of the Babylonian pantheon and was closely linked to Babylonian kingship (Lambert (1963)). But the Babylon of legend was essentially the creation of Nebuchadnezzar II, who used the wealth acquired by empire to lay out anew the city, which had undoubtedly suffered in the struggles against Assyria, and equipped it with magnificent buildings. This is the city excavated by the Deutsche Orient Gesellschaft from 1899 to 1916.[35]

Babylon formed a rectangle, surrounded by a massive and complex, turreted wall, pierced by eight gates and lapped by a water-filled moat. The Euphrates flowed through the city, its banks protected by great quay-walls, and could be crossed by a solidly built bridge. Virtually all the important public buildings—temples and palace—were located in the larger, eastern section of the city. Another wall ran outside the moated fortification of the eastern city, enclosing another possible palace located 2 km. to the north, which the excavators thought was used as a royal summer residence. This outer wall was some 7.5 km. long; with the Euphrates to the west, it formed a triangle measuring *c.* 12.5 km. in circumference. Straight streets ran from the city-gates to the centre, dividing the urban terrain into regular sectors.

The main temples, home of the city-god Marduk, were located centrally and enclosed by walls. To the north rose the great ziggurat, Etemenanki ('House of the Bond of Heaven and Earth'), with probably seven stages, each one painted a different colour and surmounted by a small shrine.[36] Access was almost certainly by a straight central staircase, and perhaps two sets of flanking stairs (cf. Schmid (1990)). The precise function of ziggurats is unknown: the upper shrine *may* have been used for a sacred marriage ceremony, but what

[35] Koldewey (1990); Unger (1928).

[36] Precise height is not known, as all that survives at Babylon is a badly denuded stump. The ziggurat at Ur (*c.* 2100 BC) was originally *c.* 12 m. high; the thirteenth-century one at Choga Zanbil was 100 m. square and *c.* 48 m. high. Only at Khorsabad in Assyria (eighth-century) is there a trace of spiral access.

this was precisely is hotly debated.[37] Another important aspect of the ziggurat is that it 'entombed' earlier sacred buildings inside its core, thus preserving and protecting them (Stone (1997)). Directly next to it was the great lower temple of Marduk, Esangil ('Lofty House'). From these two structures, considered the most sacred and oldest, led the Processional Way (to the east), decorated with brilliantly coloured, glazed, moulded bricks showing bulls, dragons (the animal sacred to Marduk), and lions. The street passed another temple to the north, where the royal investiture took place (Pongratz-Leisten (1994) 103), and led on past the walls of the palace and through the immense, identically decorated Ishtar gate. The central section of the street was paved with white limestone slabs, red breccia paving on either side creating the effect of a modern street. It was along this street that the king led the procession of cult-statues, temple attendants, citizenry, followed by displays of booty from royal campaigns (living and material) on the occasion of the New Year Festival (Berger (1970)). A further feature is that the processional way gradually sloped upwards on both sides of the city wall, so that the Ishtar gate and the royal palace, on its raised platform, were elevated above other dwellings, forming a lower, but marked, elevation to balance the immense height of the ziggurat. The large royal residence rode on the inner city-wall, extending beyond it to the north, jutting west to the river and surrounded by walls to form a prominent citadel. Parts of it were decorated with glazed bricks, depicting lions and floral motifs, using the same colours as the Ishtar gate. Other temples were located throughout the city. The urban space was densely inhabited, houses crowding together along twisted streets within the regular pattern of rectangular segments created by the main streets.[38]

[37] Two distinct rituals are dubbed 'sacred marriage': one is the marriage of two gods, represented by their statues; the other a ceremony during which the goddess of erotic love, Inanna/Ishtar (represented by a priestess?), and the king in the guise of her mythical lover, Dumuzi, had intercourse. How this latter was enacted precisely is enigmatic as, apart from literary allusions, no descriptions survive. Scholars are, therefore, divided on what it involved. For arguments denying its performance, see Leick (1994) 111–38; for acceptance, Frymer-Kensky (1992) 50–7. Best recent assessments of ritual, Cooper (1993); Goodnick-Westenholz (1995).

[38] The topography of Babylon is re-examined, using the literary texts known as 'The Description of Babylon' and more recent examinations of the city's terrain, in George (1992), (1993), (1997); this supersedes, in many important respects, the earlier study by Unger (1931).

As we saw, there is no evidence that the Persians modified Babylon's layout or buildings substantially. One addition was that at least one, possibly more, copies of Darius' Behistun inscription, in Accadian, and surmounted by an over life-size relief of the king triumphant over the rebels, was set up along the palace wall fronting the Processional Way (Seidl (1976), (1999)). The message of Babylon's definitive defeat and subjection was driven home in no uncertain manner, the inscription claiming Babylon's own god, Marduk, as supporter of Darius' action. A beautiful small Persian palace was built in the westernmost courtyard of the south part of Nebuchadnezzar's citadel by Artaxerxes II (405–359), decorated with brick reliefs of the kind known from Susa.[39] But this did not happen until some decades after Herodotus.

Babylonian society

Despite the political turmoil experienced by Babylonia between the late seventh and fifth centuries, social and economic structures present an image of continuity. This probably masks all sorts of shifts and changes, which are hard for modern scholars to pin down, but it also reflects a real constancy in the basic framework. The mode of production of staples, such as barley and sesame (dependent on irrigation), dates (requiring artificial pollination, cf. Hdt. 1.193.4–5), and wool did not change in any fundamental respects. Basic forms of landholding and exploitation were unchanged. Some transformations can be observed: for example, more land began to be worked in the late Assyrian period, a trend which intensified under the Neo-Babylonian and early Persian rulers (Cocquerillat (1968)); the system of granting land to individuals in return for service and tax, was definitively tightened and extended in the early Persian period (Stolper (1977)). But these were modifications of existing systems, not drastic changes.

The same is true of the Babylonian cities, where the great temples retained their long-established forms of cult, involving many of the free citizens (Kuhrt (1995a) 610–21), although they seem to have been drawn into the network of service and tax demands by the

[39] Vallat (1989); Haerinck (1990), (1997).

Persian regime, and certainly received less spectacular royal donations (Joannès (1990)). It is also possible that some of the large cities shrank in size in the course of the Achaemenid period, and there was a concomitant increase in rural, 'manorial' settlement, although the evidence is chronologically imprecise (Joannès (1997) 283). But the overriding impression is of continuity: juridically free citizens, claiming certain rights *vis-à-vis* the royal authority, formed the leading segment of the urban population: they supplied the local administrators, were closely involved in the temple organization, owned fields in the rural hinterland and engaged in a variety of commercial enterprises.

Many of the Babylonian elite owned substantial numbers of slaves (Dandamaev (1984)); the Egibi family seems to have concentrated much of its business on slave-dealing. Temples also owned slaves, which could not be sold, and appear to have lived in family units. Royal slaves, too, seem not to have been subject to sale, although we know little about their status. All categories of slaves could accumulate considerable property, and were often apprenticed to particular trades by their masters; but it looks as though only private slaves could be manumitted.

Some private and temple slaves worked for their owners in the sex-trade, alongside non-slave prostitutes. Attitudes to prostitution in Mesopotamia are hard to define, as the rather ambiguous evidence seems to reflect both contempt and approval.[40] Marriage practices and household structures are mainly known from dowry-agreements between prominent Babylonian families (Roth (1987), (1989)). Neither Herodotus' popular description of the Babylonian marriage-market (1.196), nor his account of compulsory ritual intercourse as part of the cult of a love-goddess (1.199), appear anywhere in Mesopotamian sources. Notions about sexuality differed profoundly from ours, but that does not confirm his sensational stories.

The population of Babylonia, in the sixth and fifth centuries, was cosmopolitan. The wealth and power of the Neo-Babylonian kings attracted craftsmen, political fugitives, merchants and soldiers; hostages from newly incorporated communities were held at court; deportation policies led to the settlement of families from defeated communities. We know of Greeks, Carians, Lydians, Cilicians, Egyptians,

[40] Kuhrt (1989), Leick (1994).

people from the coastal cities of the Levant, Jews, Medes, Persians and Elamites. In the Persian period, yet more non-Babylonian groups surface in the texts, some of them soldiers settled on land on which they owed military service (Stolper (1985)). An important function they performed was to underpin Persia's physical control of Babylonia's territory.

Of course, the relative balance of power and, hence, proportion of foreigners shifted in the Achaemenid period. The Persian satrap represented a quasi-regal power in the judicial sphere; he received substantial incomes from the province (Hdt. 1.192), held estates and controlled a staff, which was partly made up of Iranians. The king, queen, and members of the royal family all held substantial stretches of land in Babylonia (Stolper (1985)). The estates of a treasurer with an Iranian name, of an Iranian titled 'chamberlain' (Joannès and Lemaire (1996)) and of a Mardonius (Stolper (1992)) appear in texts from the reign of Darius I and Xerxes respectively. Such lands must have been confiscated from the defeated Nabonidus and his retinue. But Iranians also appear at lower, even the lowest, levels of society, intermingling with Babylonians (Stolper (1994) 255).

Members of the Babylonian urban elites appear working in the administration and managing the estates of Persian nobles. Artaxerxes I is said to have had three Babylonian concubines. His successor, Darius II Ochus, and Ochus' queen, Parysatis, were the offspring of these liaisons, indicating that some Babylonian families were in a position to forge close links with the very heart of imperial power. Artaxerxes II's building of a Persian-style palace within Nebuchadnezzar's great residence suggests that Babylonia may have occupied a relatively favoured place within the Persian empire.[41]

Conclusion

The picture of Babylonia and its capital which we can disengage from the sources differs in many fundamentals from that of Herodotus. Babylon was not an Assyrian city, although it had been subject to the Assyrians, which may account for the confusion, and Herodotus,

[41] For a full, recent discussion of Babylonia under Persian rule, see Wiesehöfer (1999).

remarkably and unlike later writers, gave space to the Neo-Babylonian empire.[42] Babylon was never ruled by a queen: Nitocris cannot be accommodated into our fairly full picture of Babylonia's history, although his brief mention of the legendary Semiramis evokes the Assyrian queen-regent, Shammuramat, active in the late eighth century, which fits his chronological scheme. The palace of Babylon lay fairly close to the central temples, not on the other side of the river; the city was enormous (*c.* 850 ha.), but nowhere near the size envisaged by Herodotus; it had eight gates not a hundred; the ziggurat did not have a spiral ascent; ill people were not displayed in public squares; girls were neither auctioned off nor prostituted to earn their dowries; nowhere in the quite dense documentation do we hear of women being compelled to have intercourse with random passers-by as part of a cult. The two images—Herodotean and Babylonian—cannot easily be harmonized, and attempts to do so remain methodologically questionable. A tribute to Herodotus' skill as a writer is that, despite the enormous volume of local material now available, his sketch of the country and its inhabitants continues to play a potent role in contemporary ideas about Babylonia (Rollinger (1993)).

[42] For analysis of Herodotus' ideas about Assyrian and Babylonian history (and that of later classical writers), see Kuhrt (1982), (1995c).

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

ARCHAIC GREEK HISTORY

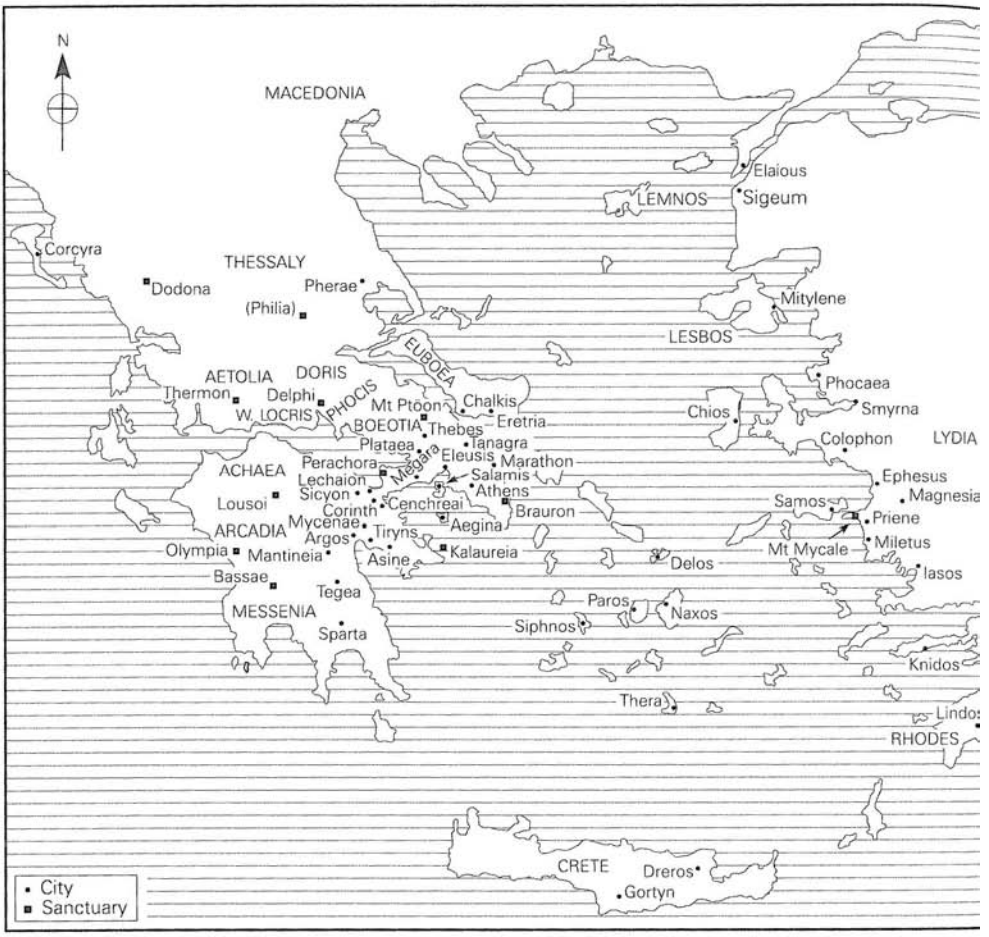
Robin Osborne

The beginning and end of archaic Greek history

Herodotus traces back past generations for as long as he can be confident that the line is a human line. At 6.53 he stops the line of Dorian kings with Perseus on the grounds that Perseus was not held to have a human father. Herodotus explicitly contrasts Perseus with Heracles, who in Amphitryon had a human father, and with the possibility of following the ancestry of Perseus' mother Danae back not just to her father Acrisius but through him to the Egyptians. The importance of making such a division between the generations of gods to the generations of men was debated, but Herodotus was not alone in making it: at 2.143 he tells how the priests at Egyptian Thebes refused to accept that a man could be descended from a god, and so constructed for Hecataeus an alternative genealogy which did not involve his ancestry having been divine sixteen generations before.

Like his Tegean informants (9.26), Herodotus does not, on the other hand, distinguish the world of men from the world of heroes. Men descend from heroes (6.69.4), and they become heroes (5.47.2, 5.114.2; cf. 6.38.1, 7.167.2) with equal ease. For as long as there have been men, Greece has had a history: the abductions of Io, Europa, Medea, or Helen (1.1–3) have potentially the same role in historical causation as the Aeginetan abduction of statues from Epidaurus (5.82–4). When Herodotus recounts how the children of the children of the Argonauts established themselves on Taygetus and claimed ancestral rights at Sparta, he is happy to use information about practice at Sparta in his own time (judicial executions are always carried out at night) in order to make credible the story about what then happened to them (4.145–9). Events of the distant past do not demand different sorts of explanation from events of the recent past.[1]

[1] On Herodotus and mythology, see Detienne (1986) 48–52, Shimron (1989) ch. 3, Lateiner (1989) 63–7.



Greece. Adapted from A. M. Snodgrass, *Archaic Greece: The Age of Experiment* (London 1980), 16-17 fig. 1.

Yet not all the past is equally knowable for Herodotus. The Cretans can be persuaded not to take part in Greek resistance to Persia by a Delphic oracle reminding them of the consequences of Minos' anger at their participation in the Trojan War (7.169–71). Herodotus also records the Cretans' story that the Carians once lived on the islands of the Aegean and were ruled by Minos before they were expelled by Dorians and Ionians, even though the Carians themselves deny that (1.171). In telling this story, Herodotus admits of doubt ('as far as I have been able to gather from my inquiries') only as to whether the Carians paid tribute. When, however, he discusses the power of the Samian tyrant Polycrates, Herodotus does allow that Minos has a rather different historical status: 'Polycrates is the first of the Greeks of whom we know who formed the plan of ruling the seas, except for Minos of Knossos and any before him who ruled the sea. Polycrates is the first of what is called the human generation and he had hopes of ruling Ionia and the islands' (3.122.2). Likewise Herodotus refuses to commit himself to the historicity of the abductions listed in 1.1–3, distinguishing them from 'what I know' (1.5.3). Later, in reckoning the Persian invasion of 480 BC to be 'by far the greatest expedition of those known to us', Herodotus qualifies the Trojan expedition and Teucer's Mysian expedition by 'according to legend' (*kata ta legomena*) (7.20.2).

In the case of Egyptian history Herodotus distinguishes what he has learned from Egyptian priests from the 'infallible knowledge' that he has of the period after the Greeks themselves settled in Egypt (2.154.4). For Greek history, as for Persian (see 1.140.1), there is no such chronological watershed. Attempts by scholars to foist upon Herodotus a firm distinction between mythical and historical times are mistaken: it is not time alone that determines whether Herodotus thinks he has reliable knowledge of particular events. When at 4.152.3 Herodotus says that, after Sostratos son of Laodamas the Aeginetan, Kolaios of Samos made the greatest profit from trade of all Greeks 'of whom we know securely' the opposition is not to putative mythical traders but to traders whose fame simply had not reached Herodotus.[2]

If archaic Greek history has a shadowy and shifting beginning in Herodotus, it has a more definite end. This end is supplied not by

[2] For claims that the Trojan Wars act as a watershed, see von Leyden (1949–50), and, generally, Lateiner (1989) ch. 5.

a change in epistemological status but by the organization of Herodotus' work. Herodotus' work is not a history of Greece, it is a history of the Persian empire and of Greek interaction with it. All that Herodotus tells us about events that happened in the Greek world prior to 499 BC we learn in digressions which serve variously to explain or to parallel episodes in the history of the Persian empire or in the history of Greek resistance to Persia after 499. Herodotus informs us rather more richly about events in Sparta after the accession of Cleomenes in 520 BC and in Athens after the murder of Hipparchus in 514 BC, but the year 520 marks no major change in Herodotus' method or coverage. While it is true that from the last quarter of the sixth century onwards events fell within the living memory of Herodotus' informants (cf. Archias of Pitana, 3.55), the distinction between this chapter and the next remains largely one of convenience, enabling the separate treatment of two particularly interesting sets of stories.[3]

The chronology of archaic Greek history

Herodotus has little interest in absolute dates. His dating of Homer and Hesiod is as much a (tendentious) claim about their distance from their subject matter as an attempt to place them at a defined point in the past: the statement that they lived four hundred years ago (2.53), made in connection with their creation of a theogony for the Greeks, has to be seen in relation to his claim that even the youngest of the gods is reckoned in Egypt to have originated more than 15,000 years before the present whereas the Greeks reckon the youngest of their gods, Pan, more recent than the Trojan War, 800 years ago (2.145).[4]

Herodotus is not interested in constructing a time-line. He provides lists of the kings of Sparta (7.204 and 8.131), but few events, even in Spartan history, are keyed in to those lists; the one action by a figure other than a king that is tied in to the king lists is Lycurgus' reform, and that is provided with two alternative, and very

[3] Cf. Vannicelli (1993) who argues that Herodotus' focus is on the three generations prior to the Persians Wars: 520 falls right in the middle of that trigenerational period.

[4] See on this question Graziosi (2002).

different, correlations. Later writers are able to provide accounts of early Spartan history that are closely linked to those king lists (see especially Pausanias 3.2–3, 4.4–7). In the case of the Mermnad and Persian rulers Herodotus indicates the length of time that each ruled (1.15, 16, 25, 86; 1.130, 214, 3.66–7, 7.4, 7.7, 7.20), but he provides no such indication for the kings of Sparta. At 2.142 Herodotus offers a translation between generations and years (three generations to one hundred years), and as far as we know he was the earliest Greek writer to attempt this; however, in view of the limited use Herodotus makes of the technique elsewhere, this innovation seems better interpreted as a rough and ready method of estimating the scale of human history in Egypt, rather than as an indication of how to convert any generational date into a date before present. Other equivalents of generations in years which Herodotus gives do not conform to the same scheme (cf. 1.7 where 22 generations correspond to 505 years).[5]

For Xerxes' invasion Herodotus provides an Athenian archon date (8.51.1), but he does so for no earlier event. He neither tells the reader that Solon was an archon nor refers to Isagoras' holding the archonship in his account of the events between the fall of Hippias and Cleisthenes' reforms; and he never provides any list of Athenian archons. Herodotus knows how long the Peisistratids ruled, the length of time that Peisistratus was in exile after his second expulsion, and how long Hippias continued to rule after the murder of Hipparchus, but he tells us these figures in separate places and makes no attempt to work out the whole chronology of the Peisistratid tyranny.[6] Similarly, Herodotus' figure for the length of Cypselus' rule as tyrant at Corinth is an isolated one (5.92ζ.1).

All of this suggests that Herodotus made no attempt to provide an integrated chronology of the past. If generations or years were part of a story told to him then he might repeat them, if he thought that they made some contribution to the story, and might convert them to a passage of years, if argument required that to be clarified.

[5] Alternatively, some have considered that Herodotus did regard three generations to a century as a basic rule, but that he failed to apply the rule universally: cf. Fowler (1996) 74–5, who thinks Herodotus *was* keenly interested in chronography; see also Chs. 14, pp. 328–34, and 17, this volume. For chronological issues more generally, see Mosshammer (1979).

[6] 1.62.1, 5.55, 5.65.3; contrast [Aristotle] *Ath. Pol.* 14–19, with Rhodes (1981) 191–2.

But he is remarkably loth to give genealogical details (3.55 and 6.126–7 stand out), and there is no sign that he regarded establishing the absolute date at which an event happened, or making possible synchronizations, as any part of his task. Herodotus does record the battle at Himera having occurred on the same day as the battle at Salamis, as something that 'the Sicilians say' (7.166.1), but in general he does not seem to consider the mere fact of events having occurred at the same time sufficiently interesting to merit any effort to establish it.

If Herodotus is little interested in dates for their own sake, he is interested in chronological relationships when they can contribute to explaining events. On occasion he draws attention to suggestive juxtapositions at the same time as denying a simple causal relationship between the events juxtaposed. The Spartan conflict with Argos leading to the battle of the Champions was at the same time as Croesus' appeal to Sparta for help (1.82.1), but the Spartan decision to act was despite rather than because of this (1.83.1). The Samians prevented the Corinthians taking 300 Corcyrean boys to Alyattes to be castrated at the same time as they stole a bowl which the Spartans were sending to Croesus (3.48.1) and a generation before the Spartan expedition against Samos in which the Corinthians participated, but Herodotus denies that the former sufficiently explains the latter (3.49.1). On other occasions Herodotus makes no explicit comment on the significance of the coincidence to which he draws attention. Miletus and Naxos were both at a peak of prosperity in 499 at the same time (5.28). But at 6.27 he asserts as a general rule that there are usually warning signs in advance when something terrible is about to happen to a city or people before telling of a series of disasters that happened to Chians at the same time (98 or 100 boys sent as a chorus to Delphi dying from plague, 119 out of 120 children killed when the roof of a school fell in) to presage the Battle of Lade (6.27). When, in Book One (59–68), Herodotus tells of the history of Sparta and Athens in order to illustrate the proposition that they were the pre-eminent cities of Greece at the time that Croesus was looking for allies against Persia, the events to which he refers both stretch back well before the time of Croesus (in the case of Sparta, where conditions held to have been established in the distant past still obtained) and extend later (in the case of Athens, where it is recent events that have most determined the fifth-century state); Herodotus

picks out those events in his account of Spartan history that are contemporary with Croesus (1.67.1).

Indicating contemporaneity is a means by which Herodotus introduces material which would not otherwise appear at that point in his account but which suggests to the reader a framework of interpretation. A fine example of this is Herodotus' account of Polycrates in Book Three. Herodotus turns to Polycrates in noting that the Spartan campaign against Samos happened at the same time as Cambyses' campaign against Egypt (3.39.1). The account that follows treats not only Polycrates' relationships with Amasis of Egypt, the Spartans and the Corinthians, and Periander of Corinth's relationship with Corcyra (as a way of explaining why the Corinthians took part in the Spartan expedition against Samos), but also that 'first campaign that the Dorian Spartans made against Asia' (3.56). At the conclusion of his account (3.60), however, Herodotus remarks that he has spent a long time on the Samians because they were responsible for the three greatest engineering achievements (*exergasmena*)—Eupalinus' tunnel, the harbour mole and Rhoikos' temple (cf. 2.148)—that is, he links his treatment explicitly to his concern for *erga*. Something not dissimilar occurs with the story of Polycrates' death and its consequences on Samos. The death is introduced as more or less contemporary with the sickness of Cambyses (3.120.1), but its place in the scheme of the histories is indicated to be that 'Samos was the first city, Greek or barbarian, that Darius captured' (3.139.1), a capture consequent upon the troubles in Samos that followed Polycrates' death. 3.139 does, however, also suggest a further reason why Herodotus located Polycrates' death in relation to the death of Cambyses: Darius had met Syloson, the man who calls him into Samos, when both were in Egypt during Cambyses' campaign.

As many of these examples already illustrate, one reason why Herodotus is interested in the order of events is that order is crucial to causation. Incidents from early Greek history are related primarily in order to explain later events:[7] the story of relations between Athens and Aegina is told in order to explain how they came to be hostile to each other at the end of the sixth century; beyond the fact that the events narrated must be before then, no other chronological indications are given (5.82–89.1). We hear of Cleisthenes of

[7] See also Ch. 11, pp. 263–6, this volume.

Sicyon's tribal reforms (5.67–8) as an explanation of the tribal reforms of his grandson, Cleisthenes, at Athens. We hear of the competition for the hand of Agariste daughter of Cleisthenes of Sicyon because it illustrates the glorious past history of the Alcmaeonidae and helps prove that they could not have acted as traitors to Athens in 490 (6.121–31). In other cases the sequential relationship between incidents seems to be indicated because a later incident explains something about an earlier one: so the not at all helpful remark that the unsuccessful *coup* of Cylon at Athens was 'before the time of Peisistratus' (5.71). As that case reminds us, explanation may be a matter of perceiving a pattern of activities which is made clearer in a later and unrelated event and not simply of understanding the antecedents. Herodotus' indications of sequence or contemporaneity often tease the reader by leaving it open whether it is a causal sequence or a parallel pattern that is primarily being offered.

Herodotus and the traditions of Greek history

In using earlier history to throw light on later history Herodotus was reproducing the very mechanism by which fifth-century Greeks passed on knowledge of their past. In many cases Herodotus says explicitly that he is passing on the stories that a certain person or people told. Herodotus is interested both in what people say about what happened in the past and in whether what they say is true. He is willing to record alternative versions of past events, noting where different informants agree or disagree; a good example of this is provided by Herodotus' telling both what the Spartans say ('consonant with nothing any poet says') about the origins of their dual kingship and what the Greeks say (6.52–3). This willingness to note alternatives extends to written sources: at 6.137 he records both what the Athenians say about their relations with the Pelasgians, and what Hecataeus said, leaving their different accounts side by side with no further comment.[8]

From time to time Herodotus indicates what he himself believes or finds incredible. His grounds for rejecting claims as false are generally that the claim is simply impossible (so Scyllias ten-mile swim

[8] On the recording of alternative sources, see Drexler (1972) 57–60, Lateiner (1989) 76–90, Shimron (1989) ch. 2, and Ch. 16, this volume.

under water (8.8)). He explicitly draws the reader's attention to his belief that he has a duty to record what people say, whether or not he himself believes it. For Herodotus what is said, as well as what actually happens, is important. At 3.9.2 he declares a story to be 'more plausible' but then insists that the less plausible version be told also 'since indeed it is said' (compare 4.195.2). The most explicit application of this to historical events concerns the reasons why Argos did not join the Greeks who actively resisted the Persians: Herodotus tells two different accounts (what the Argives say and 'another story told all over Greece') and then says 'I am duty-bound to tell what is said, but I am not at all bound to believe it—and let this sentence apply to the whole of my account' (7.152.3); he then gives yet another explanation saying 'this too is told'.

Provided we think that we can trust Herodotus' source citations,[9] his willingness to reveal who had told him what is what most renders Herodotus of value for the study of archaic Greek history and almost certainly marked him out from his predecessors (as well as from many successors). To know what (some people in) a given community said about their past is of considerable value to us, whether or not we think their claims reflected what had indeed happened. To be told that already in the fifth century different communities told different accounts of the 'same' past events is a fundamental reminder of the tendentious nature of traditions about the past, and of the inappropriateness of a modern scholar's repeating 'what people say' as if it is a straightforward account of 'what actually happened'. Since Herodotus may excerpt particular episodes from a longer and more involved discourse, we cannot always be sure of the context in which a story was originally told in the community from whom Herodotus cites it. Nevertheless, Herodotus' own account can frequently be seen to preserve the context of telling as well as the account of the particular incident, and in doing so it enables us to see how archaic Greek history was being used in the fifth century.

The most famous case of extended incompatible versions of the same past event comes in the account of the settlement of Cyrene

[9] The case against Herodotus' source citations has been most vociferously stated by Fehling (1989) (and equally vociferously responded to by Pritchett (1993)). The most important general critique is provided by Fowler (1996) 80–6. None of Fehling's 'demonstrably false source-citations' (his ch. 1) concern what we would call 'archaic Greek history'.

by the Therans. That account is part of a long story told in order to provide the background for the Persian expedition against Libya. That story is introduced by one of Herodotus' chronological coincidences, recorded because the growth of the Persian empire is his central interest and offering an extreme illustration of Persia's expansionist drive: the Persian expedition to Libya was at the same time as Darius' Scythian campaign (4.145.1). The background to the Libyan expedition starts with the foundation of Thera, about which Herodotus claims that the Spartans and the Therans told the same story (4.150.1).[10] Herodotus then continues with what the Therans say about their initial settlement in Libya (4.150–3) and then with what the Cyrenaeans say about those same initial actions (4.154–6) 'for the Cyrenaeans in no way agree with the Therans as concerns Battos', although they agree on the subsequent events.

The differences between the two accounts concern both the motivation and the responsibility for the settlement. The Theran account has Grinnos, *basileus* of Thera, going to Delphi about some other matter, being told to found a city in Libya, and selecting one Battos, a Theran of Minyan descent, for the task. It then has the Therans ignore the instruction until seven years of drought leave only one tree still alive on the island and the oracle repeats its command. The Therans consequently seek knowledge of Libya from Crete, and, with a Cretan purple-fisher guiding them, send out first an advance-party and then two pentekonters of settlers, chosen from each family and from each of the villages of Thera. This is a story of reluctant Theran settlement, of careful official planning, and of fair selection of settlers. The Cyrenaean account, by contrast, centres the whole foundation on Battos: for them he was the grandson of a Cretan king, whose mother Phronime ('wise woman') narrowly escaped death because of the influence of her stepmother, was rescued by a merchant named Themison ('the man who does right'?) and bore Battos to a Theran named Polymnestos ('the man who woos much'). Battos consulted Delphi about his stammer and was ordered to found a city in Libya but failed to act on this. The Therans suffer ill fortune, consult Delphi, and are told to found Cyrene in Libya along with Battos. Battos and two pentekonters set off, get to Libya, do

[10] On the foundation of Thera see Malkin (1994) 89–95, 106–11. For what follows on Cyrene, compare Davies (1984), Calame (1988), (1990), Vannicelli (1993) 123–48, Osborne (1996) 8–17.

not know what to do, try to return to Thera, are driven away, and settle at Platea. In this version there is no Theran planning, and rather than Battos being selected as leader for the Theran expedition, Therans are selected as manpower for Battos' expedition.

Evidence outside Herodotus both increases the probability that he did indeed hear his two versions, from the Therans and the Cyrenaeans respectively, and shows why the two parties were telling different stories. The use of the foundation story to the Therans is made very clear by the survival of a fourth-century Cyrenean inscription. This records a Theran embassy to Cyrene which claims the right of Therans to join the city of Cyrene on the basis of an oath taken at the time Cyrene was founded, and it includes the claimed oath (ML no. 5). By emphasizing in the way they tell the story of the foundation that they had behaved responsibly, the Therans stake a claim to privileged treatment by Cyrene that will ensure that Cyrene continues to be a possible place for Therans to emigrate to in time of trouble. The uses of the Cyreneans' version of their foundation can also be illustrated from another text: Pindar's *Pythian Ode* 5, celebrating a victory by Arcesilaus, king of Cyrene, in the chariot race at the Pythian Games of 462, makes Battos' founding of the city and of the royal line its central theme. As long as the Battiads remained in power at Cyrene a story of the foundation which made the figure of Battos crucial served to legitimate their rule.

One episode in the Theran version does not seem to be adequately accounted for by this explanation. The Theran version holds that after the advance party had discovered the island of Platea, the Therans left their Cretan guide on the island while they themselves returned to collect the main group of settlers. The guide was about to run out of supplies when Kolaios, a Samian merchant on his way to Egypt, arrived and provided him with food. On departing from Platea the Samian was blown through the Pillars of Heracles (Straits of Gibraltar) and ended up at Tartessos in Spain, where he made a profit so enormous that on return to Samos he dedicated a bronze krater with griffin *protomai* at the Heraion. Herodotus states that the Samians trace their great friendship with the Therans and Cyrenaeans to this episode. The favour related in this story is entirely from the Samians to the Cretan fisherman, and both on grounds of self-interest and on grounds of the existence of a physical memorial to which the story could be attached, it is easier to see how and why the Samians told this tale than that either the Therans or the Cyrenaeans

would be likely to do so (but note Arcesilaus' recruitment from Samos, discussed below).

In the case of the foundation of Cyrene it is clear that both the interested parties continued to tell the story of its foundation, even if they told it in their own way and the narrative was also latched onto by others for their own purposes. In other cases Herodotus seems to have heard of major events only because those with a marginal interest continued to tell the tale. Two instances of this concern the earliest 'events' of archaic Greek history: the (first) Messenian War and the Lelantine War.

Herodotus preserves no account of war against the Messenians in his discussion of early Spartan history. In that discussion he refers only to the Spartans having, by the time of Croesus, fled from great troubles and transformed themselves from the worst ruled people to a people enjoying good rule (*eunomia*) (1.65.1–2). The only mentions of the Messenian War come in the account of troubles in Samos and in the speech of Aristagoras at Sparta. Herodotus records that the Samians account for Spartan agreement to help the Samian exiles by reference to the Spartans repaying the earlier Samian favour of giving naval help against the Messenians, but that the Spartans deny this and say that they intervened in revenge for the earlier Samian snatching of the mixing bowl that was being taken to Croesus (3.47.1). He later has Aristagoras tell the Spartans to suspend hostilities with the Messenians, Arcadians, and Argives over scraps of land, since the rewards of fighting Persia are so much greater (5.49.8).

Herodotus repeatly cites what 'the Lacedaemonians' say, and the absence of any Spartan account of the Messenian Wars is unlikely to be a matter of chance. The extravagant history of those wars in Pausanias' *Description of Greece* comes from the Messenians; the fifth-century Spartans are surely likely to have told some story about their conqest of Messenia (if only to explain allusions in the poetry of Tyrtaeus), but it will hardly have looked like that. The thrust of the Spartans' own account of their more distant past as recorded by Herodotus focuses on alliance, not conquest: he has no mention of the conquest of Amyclae, of Helos, or of Phigaleia, all known from Pausanias (3.2.6–7, 8.39.3–5), or of the battle of Hysiae (Pausanias 2.24.7), or of Spartan struggle for the control of the Olympic games, known from Ephorus (*FGrH* 70 F 115).

In the case of the Lelantine War, the only hint comes, as with the Messenian War, in a passage attempting to explain later action.

Eretrian assistance for the Ionians in their revolt is said to have been given 'not for the sake of the Athenians but for the sake of the Milesians themselves, paying back a debt that was owed to them, for the Milesians in earlier times joined in war on the side of the Eretrians against the Chalcidians, when the Samians helped the Chalcidians against the Eretrians and Milesians' (5.99.1). Once more we see here the story of an early conflict being told not by the central participants but by an outside party keen to keep alive the record of a debt of gratitude that they considered to be owed to themselves. Herodotus may have been particularly sensitive to and mindful of such stories, for his whole vision of history is dominated by the settling of old debts and old scores.[11]

Herodotus drew his informants from a large number of Greek cities, but there are many cities that are never cited as the source for any story.[12] These 'silent cities' include Chalcis and Eretria, and the absence of an account of the Lelantine War may be a product of Herodotus' never having been in a position to acquire a Euboean version; it is to be noted that neither in the case of the battle between the Athenians and Chalcidians in *c.* 507 nor in that of the sack of Eretria by the Persians in 490 does Herodotus offer an account from the Euboean side. Whatever determined the limits of Herodotus' own inquiries—and the practical impossibility of visiting every Greek city might be combined with differential enthusiasm for experiencing different political regimes—we should not underestimate the extent to which the shape and tenor of Herodotus' account was affected by whose stories he did and whose stories he did not hear.

[11] Gould (1991), (1989) 42–7; see also Ch. 9, pp. 209–17, this volume.

[12] Jacoby (1913) 398–9 lists the following Greek sources of *logoi* (asterisks indicate that citation 15 for a single *logos*): 'Greeks', Peloponnesians, Lacedaemonians/Spartiates, Argives, *Eleians, Arcadians, Corinthians, Aeginetans, Athenians, Delphians, *Thebans, *Thessalians, Dodonaeans, Macedonians, *Poteidaeans, *Abderans, *Chersonesites, *Proconnesians and Cyzicenes, Delians, *Parians, *Cretans, *Praisians, Therans, *Lesbians, *Ionians, Samians, *Milesians, *Cnidians, Cyreneans, *Sybarites, *Crotoniates, *Metapontines, *Syracusans. In addition he cites 'locals' to the regions of Thermopylae, *the Magnesian coast and *Plataea, and Greek residents of Pontus, *Scythia, and *Borysthenes.

Herodotus' neglect of written sources

Herodotus names only one writer of prose in the course of his histories—Hecataeus who figures both as a writer (*logopoios*) (2.143, 6.137, see above), and as a political figure in his own right (5.36, 125).[13] Among poets he names (as poets) Homer, Hesiod, Archilochus, Alcaeus, Sappho, Solon, Olen, Simonides, Pindar, Phrynichus and Aeskhylus, and at other times he refers to 'the poets'.[14] Archilochus may have been mentioned (some editors delete the reference as a marginal gloss) as having referred to Gyges (1.12). Alcaeus ran away in a battle between the Mytileneans and the Athenians at Sigeion, leaving his arms behind to be dedicated by the Athenians and writing up the incident in a poem (6.95). Sappho abused her brother Charaxus for his relationship to Rhodopis (2.135). Solon wrote poetry in praise of Philocyprus (5.113). Olen from Lycia is the author of hymns sung at Delos (4.35). Simonides is the author of the Thermopylae epigrams (7.228), and praised in poetry the Eretrian athlete and general Eualcides who was killed in the battle between Persians and Greeks which followed the burning of Sardis (5.102.3). Pindar called *nomos* 'king of all' (3.38). Phrynichus was fined over his play on the *Capture of Miletus* (6.21.2), Aeschylus is cited for a view about the relationship between the gods (2.156).

It is notable that Herodotus makes no use of the poetry of Tyrtaeus and effectively none of the poetry of Solon, both of whom were extensively quarried for historical allusions by later writers, and that he fails to make more systematic use of Alcaeus. It is impossible to be certain which poetic texts Herodotus would have had to hand, but Aristophanes seems to expect familiarity with a wide range of archaic poets. Herodotus himself clearly expects the reader to be familiar with the names of the poets that he names, but many of the mentions seem to be casual notes, whether his own or those of his informants, and at no point does he seem to have gone searching in literary texts for historical information. Herodotus' failure is best interpreted in the light of his parallel failure to make use of epigraphic evidence.

[13] For further discussion of Herodotus' use of written sources, see Lateiner (1989) ch. 4.

[14] 2.23, 3.115, 6.52; cf. 5.67.

Herodotus mentions inscriptions on some 19 occasions. Outside Greece Sesostris recorded his military exploits on stelai (2.102, 103, 106), Croesus set up an inscribed boundary stone at Cydrara (7.30), Nitocris' tomb at Babylon had an inscription on the outside and a further written message on the inside, and Darius put an inscription on his own equestrian statue (3.88), recorded in Greek and Assyrian the names of all the ethnic contingents that made up his expeditionary force to Scythia and setting these up at the Bosporus (4.87), and also recorded his achievement in arriving at the River Tearus (4.91); it is not clear that Herodotus had seen any of these inscriptions. Herodotus does, however, note the continued existence of Alyattes' tomb, on which letters were inscribed (1.93), which may be a sign of autopsy, and explicitly claims that an interpreter read for him the inscription on Cheops' pyramid (2.125), though he makes no such claim about the inscription on the pyramid of Asychis (2.136) or the statue of Sethos (2.141). In the Greek world he records that the Samians listed the names of the commanders of the eleven Samian ships that stayed to fight at Lade and his mention that this inscription is in the agora suggests that he may have seen it (6.14); he quotes the text of Mandrocles' dedication at the Samian Heraion to celebrate his bridging the Bosporus (4.88) and he records the inscription of the Thermopylae epigrams (7.228); he quotes the epigram on the chariot dedication celebrating the Athenian victory over Chalcis and Boeotia and tells us where the dedication stood (5.77);[15] he quotes three inscriptions put up at Thermopylae (7.228) and the message to the Ionians inscribed by Themistocles at Artemision (8.22), and he mentions the addition of the name of the Tenians to the Serpent column at Delphi (8.82). He also claims to have seen, in the temple of Ismenian Apollo at Thebes, inscriptions in Cadmeian letters dating to the time of Oedipus and the following generations, which he quotes (5.59–61), and to know the name of the Delphian who added an inscription to a dedication made by Croesus to say that that dedication was made by the Spartans (1.51).

In every case the inscribed object acts to confirm the account Herodotus has given. In many cases the inscription was part of a

[15] Some have found Herodotus' description of the site of the chariot inconsistent with the other evidence for its location (West (1985) 284–5), but if 'entering the Propylaea' is understood to mean 'passing through the Propylaea' his description is entirely accurate.

story, in others it seems likely that the teller of a story pointed to an inscription to lend plausibility to the claims that were being made, or, in the case of the forged inscription, to demolish evidence that contradicted the claim that was being made. Modern scholars reasonably object that close scrutiny of the stories or of the inscriptions would in many cases have given Herodotus strong grounds for doubting the truth of what was claimed.[16] The relatively uncritical confirmatory use of inscriptions is exactly parallel to the way in which Herodotus uses uninscribed objects (the bronze of a man on a dolphin to confirm the story of Arion (1.24); the fetters in the temple of Athena Alea at Tegea to confirm the story of the battle (1.66); the dedication of the krater that confirms the story of Kolaios the Samian (4.152); there are many more examples). Just as in all these cases the uninscribed object falls short of proving Herodotus' story correct, so too with inscribed objects, it is sufficient for Herodotus that they have been cited to prove a case, he does not consider whether or not the proof is good. Nor does Herodotus scrutinize inscriptions in order to deduce from them the events of the past: if there is no story attached by his informants to an inscribed object there is no sign that Herodotus will be interested in it.[17] Plutarch (*On the Malice of Herodotus* 870c) objected to Herodotus' failure to make full use of the inscription on the Serpent Column over such matters as the contribution of the Corinthians to the victory. However, Herodotus' corroborative use of textual evidence, using that evidence when it fits a line of argument but not starting from the evidence and asking what it means, is closely parallel to the use of evidence in the Hippocratic writings.[18]

To understand Herodotus' neglect of potential poetic and epigraphic evidence we need also to understand two further features of his work. The first is that he is primarily interested in the way the past is used in the present. Paradoxically, in view of the concern expressed in his preface to prevent great and remarkable things fading, he shows no interest in discovering about the past as such. The explanation for this paradox lies in the explanatory power of the past. Herodotus wishes the story of Greek relations with Persia to

[16] So, especially, West (1985).
[17] Marincola (1997a) 103–4.
[18] Compare G. E. R. Lloyd (1979) 168–9, (1987) 118–19, 123, 263–4, and, more generally on Herodotus and the Hippocratics, Thomas (2000).

be understood because it will explain the situation in which his contemporaries find themselves; events from the archaic period that have been forgotten do not offer the same explanatory power with regard to the fifth-century situation. Indeed, one might argue that to resurrect forgotten events might actually mislead, if it led to events of which an actor was ignorant being used to explain the actor's actions.

The second feature that is closely related to Herodotus' neglect of poetic and epigraphic writing as a source is his limiting arguments to a single stage. Objects which themselves directly witness to the truth of a tale are one thing, texts which imply something about a past situation that then has further implications are another. Herodotus himself notes from time to time that the stories people tell raise issues which they do not themselves answer (e.g., 1.49, 7.60): even when there is scope for using written sources to fill the gaps in oral sources or settle a debate, there is no sign that Herodotus made any attempt to do so (no sign, for instance, that he trawled through Alcaesus' poetry to see if it shed light on whether Bias or Pittacus was the man who answered Croesus' request for news from Greece (1.27)). There is no Herodotean parallel to the epigraphic detective work of Thucydides on the Peisistratids (6.54–5).

Herodotus and the study of archaic Greek history

Herodotus is an invaluable source for, but no sort of guide to, archaic Greek history. The individual stories that he tells offer vivid illumination of the nature of archaic Greek life,[19] but even for Athens it is clear that Sir John Myres' claim that 'Herodotus knows all the principal crises in the long early history' is wishful thinking ((1953) 177). Herodotus tells us a minimal story about Cylon, never mentions Dracon, and although knowing that Solon was a lawgiver (1.29, 2.177) gives us no insight either into Solon's laws or into any crisis that led to his appointment. His account of Peisistratus and his sons is very strongly weighted towards Peisistratus the deceiver and to the end of the tyranny, and his analysis of the factors that led to Peisistratus' success and his sons' failure is in narrowly personal terms.

[19] Compare above all the account of the marriage of Agariste, 6.126–30; see Murray (1993) 212–14.

Despite his interest in the effects of democracy on Athens' strength, Herodotus displays no interest in the earlier constitutional arrangements at Athens.

Herodotus' account surely reflects the Athenians' own attitudes in the middle of the fifth century. All the signs are that there was little interest in Solon's constitutional arrangements until dissatisfaction with radical democracy in the last quarter of the century led to an attempt to promote the ancestral constitution as an alternative, at which point what Solon did, or what he could be held to have done, became important (cf. Hansen (1990)). Some documentary research seems to have been carried out in the late fifth century and it is likely that this, and the related re-inscription of the law code, increased the consciousness that certain laws were Solonian, which is first visible in Aristophanes *Birds* 1660. Herodotus' Athens was the Athens of Pericles' Funeral Speech, proud of its present condition and not much concerned with the details of its past condition.

In as far as early Athenian history was altered after Herodotus, it was by documentary research. Some of this research was on material dating back to the archaic period, but much of it involved uncovering claims about early history made in the context of late fifth-century or fourth-century argument.[20] The account that [Aristotle] gives in the *Athenaion Politeia* reflects the activities of earlier Atthidographers (see Rhodes (1981) 20–30). Solon's poetry was searched for historical allusions (*Ath. Pol.* 12), and his laws for patterns to his legislation (*Ath. Pol.* 9); inscriptions yielded evidence for Solonian census classes (*Ath. Pol.* 7.4) and perhaps an annotated archon list (behind e.g., *Ath. Pol.* 13.1–2?). But the Aristotelian *Athenaion Politeia* also derives items more or less directly from Herodotus, adding only an interpretation, shaped by fourth-century ideas, of how politics worked, and where this is the case modern scholars' preference for the Aristo-telian version seems perverse.[21] Although their studies meant that the Atthidographers were technically better equipped than Herodotus, their historical understanding was not necessarily superior, partly because many of the sorts of additional information available to them did not contribute directly to an understanding of why events happened. The history of Pisistratus and his sons is a good indication

[20] So e.g., the 'Constitution of Dracon' in *Athenaion Politeia* 4; see Rhodes (1981) 84–8.

[21] For a recent example, see Gouschin (1999).

of this: *Athenaion Politeia* adds a number of anecdotes about the character of Pisistratus (ch. 16) and a divergent version of his family line (ch. 17), but the account continues to revolve around the inception and destruction of the tyranny and the 'factual' basis for historical judgment available to the author is much the same as was available to Herodotus.[22]

In the case of Sparta,[23] Herodotus does show constitutional interest, but this is largely because the Spartans claimed that the fifth-century constitutional arrangements, to which Herodotus uniquely devotes considerable space (6.56–60), had been long established. He knows also about Lycurgus' reforms, about the long struggle with Tegea and about the crisis over King Anaxandridas' failure to produce the requisite son and heir (5.39). The ephor Chilon makes an appearance giving advice to Peisistratus' father at Olympia (1.59) and observing the problematic position of Cythera (7.235) but plays no role in formulating Spartan policy. Herodotus' knowledge can be explained in terms of Spartan fifth-century interests: they have an interest in claiming their constitution to have been long unchanged, and hence tell about Lycurgus; they have an interest in maintaining that they had renounced subjugation of the rest of the Peloponnese and that they shared interests with the other Peloponnesian states, and hence they told the story of the struggle with Tegea in which the Battle of the Fetters was succeeded by the Bones of Orestes.[24] Other incidents they tell of in as far as they act as good exempla: hence the story of the 'Battle of the Champions' (1.82). The density of Spartan history gets much greater with the accession of Cleomenes: his reign lay within living memory, the events of the reign were still having repercussions in the period of the Persian Wars themselves, and his story offered an autocratic template which helped to explain others' behaviour and its consequences.

Subsequent writers were not able much to enrich Herodotus' account of archaic Spartan history. The explosion of material on Lycurgus that enabled Plutarch to write a *Life* included but little genuine archaic material (although it did invaluably include the Great

[22] See, briefly, Osborne (1996) 283–5.

[23] For which see Vannicelli (1993) 21–98.

[24] As an interpretation of sixth-century events, this classic modern interpretation is rightly criticized by Boedeker (1993), but as an interpretation of Spartan telling of the stories it retains its power.

Rhetra, which item, at least, was the fruit of fourth-century Aristotelian research). Pausanias was able to include massive accounts of the Messenian Wars, but these are almost certainly fictions created in the newly independent Messenian state (Starr (1965)). He also has stories related to the formation of the Peloponnesian League which may be genuine long-lived oral traditions preserved in cities which Herodotus never visited (e.g., the story of the bones of Teisamenus, Pausanias 7.1.7–8).

The best example of a continuous city history in Herodotus is in fact Cyrene.[25] Cyrene owes its special treatment to the fact that it had a history of contact with Persia quite separate from that of mainland Greece and Ionia, and the explanation of that separate history demanded that events there be traced in some detail. Thus we learn not only of its foundation (see above), but of subsequent discord leading to the appointment of Demonax of Mantineia as lawgiver, and of Arcesilaus, Pheretime, and the events leading up to the Persian expedition to Libya. The richness of the tradition here, in which the partial suppression of the 'democratic' reforms recommended by Demonax leads to a period of intense civil strife and to Persian intervention, may result from there being an ongoing struggle in Cyrene up until the time of the final overthrow of the Battiads, and to the availability to Herodotus of a 'popular' tradition. Subsequent writing on Cyrene adds very little to Herodotus' account.

In the case of Corinth we learn about how Cypselus got power, how his son Periander behaved when in power, and in particular the relations between Periander and his own son (5.92; 3.48–53). Both these stories are told to explain incidents in other stories: we learn about Cypselus and Periander from the speech of Socles to the Peloponnesians as he dissuades them from restoring Hippias to power in Athens; we learn about Periander and his son as a way of explaining why the Corinthians took part in the Spartan expedition against Samos.[26] Herodotus has little interest in Corinth herself, but these incidents both promote understanding of histories which he does think are important, and offer portraits of tyrannical power that help to form his particular presentation of autocracy.[27]

[25] On Cyrene, see Chamoux, (1953), Vannicelli (1993) 123–48.

[26] Both these stories have been much discussed. For recent discussions, see McGlew (1993) 61–72, Sourvinou-Inwood (1991) 244–84.

[27] Herodotus' attitudes to tyranny and autocracy have been much discussed; see Dewald (2002), Lateiner (1989) 169–75, Ferrill (1978), Waters (1971).

Although Herodotus justifies his account of Samos in part by reference to her engineering achievements (see above), the opportunity to show autocracy in action (and the difficulties arising on liberation from autocracy) is important here too. Herodotus tells us about Polycrates' relationships with Amasis of Egypt and Oroetes the *hyparkhos* of Sardis, about the Spartan expedition against him, and about what happened in Samos at his death.[28] He also, however, tells us about the Samian Kolaios' role in the foundation of Cyrene and about Arcesilaus of Cyrene using Samos as a base from which to recruit an army with which to effect his own restoration (4.152, 163–4). Both these incidents are presented seamlessly within the Cyrenean account of their own history, but Samians are likely to have been even keener than Cyreneans to keep these stories alive in the interests of maintaining and reinforcing a claim to good relations between the cities.

For no other city does Herodotus show any knowledge of events before 520 except for particular incidents—Cleisthenes of Sicyon's tribal reforms and daughter's marriage (5.67–8; 6.126–30), Pheidon of Argos' reform of measures and highly hybristic actions (not specified) (6.127.3), the beginnings of the struggle between Aegina and Athens (5.82–9). The Cleisthenes stories are both embedded in episodes of Athenian history, and there is no sign of a Sicyonian source; the Aeginetan story also involves Athens but here Herodotus does claim to know the Aeginetan version. Later historians will know more about Sicyon, and a little more about Pheidon, but were not able to supplement Herodotus' version of Aeginetan history.

Herodotus tells us about those events in archaic Greek history where his interests and the interests of his informants can be made to intersect. Herodotus will have experienced what regularly frustrates ancient historians today, that the sources of information available are not interested in answering the questions the historian wants to ask. There is no doubt that he has selected from amongst the stories he was told and so has shaped the way in which we see archaic Greek history, as well as what we see; but it is also the case that the stories of archaic Greece played a part in shaping Herodotus' view of the world.

[28] For more on Polycrates, see Osborne (1996) 272–80 and Ch. 23, pp. 524–8, this volume.

What did the history of archaic Greece contribute to Herodotus?

Herodotus plunged into the Greek past in order to explain how the clash with Persia happened and why it turned out as it did. Given the opinion that he had formed as to the importance of the political constitution (law, freedom, the role of the people, cf. 5.78, 7.102, 104) in mainland Greek resistance to and victory over Persia, it is not surprising that issues of political power figure largely in his account. Nor is it surprising, in view of the failure of the Ionian revolt and of their subsequent histories, that a similar sequence of events on Samos and at Athens (removal of tyrant by external action, rivalry amongst the political elite as to what should happen next, bid by one party to open up political power to the people) should be portrayed in very different ways. Archaic Greek history offered Herodotus a number of different templates, and in different contexts he offered up different templates to the reader's attention.

It is important that archaic Greek history offered a dynamic, not a static, template for Herodotus to use. People told stories about the past to explain where they had come from and how they had arrived where they were. Those stories explained change, they did not simply recount the current situation. So too, Herodotus is in general not keen to describe the contemporary workings of a Greek city: he tells us the bare minimum we need to know in order to appreciate that Cleisthenes at Athens changed the established order to put more power in the hands of the people, but he does not explain how the new order worked. Even the implications of the reforms for army organization are left to be teased out from the discussion of military authority at Marathon (6.109–10).

Archaic Greek history offered to Herodotus stories of both the rise and the fall of autocrats, but it offered only the story of the rise of good government. Autocrats replaced a variety of constitutional arrangements, but the stories that Herodotus retells showed little interest in their virtues or vices, merely casting a momentary glance at their weakness—the inbred Bacchiads (5.92β–γ) or the faction-riven Athenians (1.59). The stories were interested in how autocrats got power, and Herodotus reflects this, even though the gaining of autocratic power had little role in his story (Herodotus' narrative repeatedly stresses the role of autocratic deceit: 1.59–64, 5.67–8, 5.92; compare 3.84–7). Those stories were important for Herodotus largely as the background to the problems faced by autocratic rulers and

to their downfall. The most important fact about autocrats was that they were none of them good: even Pheidon, in his cameo appearance, is introduced as hybristic. By contrast the most important fact about the well-ordered city was its endurance. The Spartan interest in laying claim to a constitution unchanged since it was set up by Lycurgus matched his own judgment of the positive powers of good rule, and it is not surprising that the alternative version, in which the ephorate was a later modification (Aristotle *Politics* 1313a), if it existed before the late fifth century, does not get recorded by him. The 'ethnographic' treatment of Sparta (6.56–60), unique among Greek states, is perhaps best explained by the need Herodotus felt to demonstrate that Spartan kingship was not a matter of autocracy. The continuation of factional disputes in Athens after the introduction of democracy gets no coverage: ostracism only gets mentioned (and then not explained) when Aristeides offers good advice to Themistocles despite their enmity (8.79). But the ignoring of democratic reforms at Cyrene that brings only disaster is recounted at length.

The ability of the Greeks to resist the Persians when they clashed with them in the early fifth century BC was a product of their past history. Had Herodotus not established what it is to write about the Persian Wars, any historian today trying to account for what happened would want to take close account of Greek methods of fighting, the economic base of the Greek city, the Greek sense of identity, Greek attitudes to co-operation and authority, Greek modes of making decisions—in other words, our own versions of many of Herodotus' questions. Doing that would involve delving back into the historical events of the sixth century, as Herodotus delves back, but it would not re-write Herodotus' *Histories*. Just as our questions would be influenced by the patterns of histories accounting for the course of other wars in history, so Herodotus' account was influenced by the shape of the stories he was told. Herodotus' account of archaic Greek history necessarily itself reflected the shape imposed by his informants upon the stories handed down to them. This shape was not fixed, for it was seen through the changing lens of present developments, both political and intellectual.[29] That lens, through which the

[29] Compare again the use of current Spartan execution practices as criteria of past behaviour at 4.146.

course of the Persian Wars themselves were presented, became the shape of history. Whatever the talk was in the days and months after the battles, when military manoeuvres and individual acts of martial skill and bravery may well have played a large part, by the time Herodotus came to question Greeks about their past the politics of Greek success in the Persian Wars had become the most prominent aspect of the discussion. Political events dominated fifth-century accounts of earlier history and were held to have made most difference to the prosperity of a Greek city because it was politics which those who told stories of the past could hope directly to influence. Herodotus' last word is that even when it comes to matters of conquest and the effects of conquest, the decision that determines economic conditions is a political decision (9.122).[30]

[30] I am grateful to Sara Forsdyke, Hans van Wees, and, in particular, Christopher Pelling for stimulating comments on an earlier draft of this chapter.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

GREEK HISTORY *c.* 525–480 BC

Sara Forsdyke

Introduction

Herodotus defines the subject of his history as 'the affairs of men', 'great and wondrous deeds', and 'the cause of the war' (Preface). Yet the events that he narrates under these rubrics are often quite different from what modern historians would write about. For this reason, historians have often chided Herodotus for not recording what *they* think is important. Recently, however, scholars have approached Herodotus more productively by focussing on what Herodotus *does* say and what this indicates about the nature of his sources and his methods of composition. It is only by gaining greater insight into these features of Herodotean historiography that modern historians may better understand what his accounts can tell us about archaic and classical Greek history.

The recognition that Herodotus gathered his material from oral traditions is fundamental to evaluating his accounts of Greek history.[1] Although some documentary and literary sources were available, it is generally agreed that he relied primarily on informants who reported the oral traditions of communities (e.g., *poleis*) and groups within communities (e.g., families) as well as panhellenic traditions. The latter would have been transmitted at meeting places such as oracular shrines, at games, and by travelling poets and 'logographers' such as Herodotus. Recently a more sophisticated understanding of the nature of oral traditions and the factors which affect their historical reliability has led to significant advances in our understanding of what Herodotus can tell us about Greek history.[2] While a basic distinction between different types of tradition is essential to determining the influences on the shape of traditions about the past,

[1] Argued by Jacoby (1913) 413 ff. and (1949).
[2] See Thomas (1989); Murray (1987); Evans (1991); Raaflaub (1988a).

nevertheless, it has also been recognized that these traditions cannot be wholly separated since they tend to influence one another.[3] Thus, while *polis* traditions can often be detected as underlying some of Herodotus' narratives, in some cases their form in Herodotus' *Histories* reveals that they have been adapted to suit the needs of a Panhellenic audience.[4] Panhellenic traditions, likewise, can be adopted into *polis* traditions and adapted to fit local needs.[5]

Within the category of *polis* tradition, moreover, we may distinguish popular *polis* traditions, which tend to emphasize the moral and religious aspects of the past, from official *polis* traditions, which emphasize the justice and injustice of different political actors in the past. Yet moralizing or religious themes are often present in official *polis* traditions, while popular traditions may be focussed on political actors. The recognition of the variety of types of traditions and the ways that they relate and adapt to each other and to changing historical circumstances, nevertheless, has been one significant advance in Herodotean scholarship. Focus has also shifted from the simple recognition of bias to an interest in what the oral traditions in Herodotus' narratives can tell us about fifth-century Greek values, ideologies, and self-perception.[6]

Historians have often castigated Herodotus for focussing on the motives and actions of individuals rather than the larger social, political, and economic forces that modern historians tend to cite as explanations for historical change. Yet the study of oral traditions has allowed scholars to recognize that this is a narrative technique which is a feature of the oral traditions and oral society in which he was writing. Moreover, although the focus on individual motivations and acts (particularly the ideas of reciprocity and retribution) provides a convenient narrative device for Herodotus and the traditions on which he relies, Herodotus reveals on many occasions that

[3] Raaflaub (1988a) 218; Thomas (1989) 238–51; Lavelle (1993) 94.

[4] In Forsdyke (2001) and below, pp. 545–6, for example, I argue that the Demaratus-logos in 7.101–4, may have begun as a Spartan tradition extolling the Spartan military ethic, but has adopted elements of Athenian anti-tyrannical tradition, and finally, has been adapted to fit a panhellenic perspective by which general Greek values are contrasted to non-Greek, specifically Persian values.

[5] For example, as I argue in Forsdyke (1999) and below, pp. 544–5, panhellenic traditions about the Cypselid tyranny were adapted to fit the needs of the Athenian democracy.

[6] See for example Hartog (1980), Euben (1986), Raaflaub (1987), Georges (1994) 115–66, Cartledge (1995).

he is aware of larger historical forces.[7] Thus in discussing Herodotus' understanding of Greek history in these years, it is important to be sensitive to how his narratives reveal an awareness of the deeper historical forces as well as the immediate causes which ostensibly motivate his narratives.

As important as the role of oral tradition in shaping his accounts is Herodotus' own 'literary personality', by which I mean the role of his own aesthetic, moral, and conceptual framework.[8] It is clear, for instance, that Herodotus' conception of the inevitable rise and fall of individuals and communities shapes his presentation of events. Yet it is often difficult to separate the formative role of Herodotus' own conceptual framework from that of his oral sources. Oswyn Murray has argued that the moral patterning of rise to greatness, *hubris* and ultimate downfall was central to East Greek oral traditions yet also was characteristic of Herodotus' historical framework precisely because he was a product of these traditions.[9] A second example of this overlap is the importance of political freedom in Greek *polis* traditions and in Herodotus' own value system. The exact mixture of Herodotus' own conceptual framework and that of the traditions from which he drew is a matter of debate between historians and literary critics, and is one of the most fertile areas for future research.[10]

I shall follow the narrative sequence of Herodotus in my analysis of Herodotus' treatment of Greek history in the period 525–480 BC. This *modus operandi* leads to a somewhat disjointed presentation of

[7] On the narrative pattern of act and counteract cf. Lang (1984) 12, 79 and Gould (1989) 63–85. Gould, however, disputes the idea that this pattern is merely a narrative device and argues that it has a more fundamental role in Herodotus' understanding of why things happen. I would argue that the pattern can be both a narrative device characteristic of oral traditions and reflective of these traditions' historical understanding.

[8] I owe the phrase 'literary personality' to Murray (1987) 97.

[9] Murray (1987) 105–7 (and see also Ch. 13, pp. 296–8, this volume). Although Murray also notes the importance of this moral patterning in traditions of the shrine at Delphi, he argues that East Greek traditions differ from Greek mainland traditions in that they are shaped by moral not political aims. I am not so sure that moral patterning is absent from mainland traditions or political aims from Delphic and Eastern traditions. Nevertheless, the recognition that some of the traditions which Herodotus uses have a moral function and others a political function, regardless of geography, is valid and extremely important in determining the kinds of distortion that Herodotus' historical accounts have undergone.

[10] The essays in Boedeker (1987) are particularly good in showing Herodotus' role in shaping his material. See also Immerwahr (1966) and Lateiner (1989).

Greek history since Herodotus' method of narration does not follow strict chronological order or provide a comprehensive account, as has already been noted. Nevertheless, this order of presentation best illustrates how Herodotus and his sources remembered the past and allows me to focus on what they chose to remember and why rather than what they left out.[11]

Polycrates of Samos and the Spartans

The first episode of Greek history of our period which Herodotus narrates is the Spartan expedition against the tyrant Polycrates of Samos, *c.* 523 (3.39–60).[12] Herodotus tells us that the Spartans were summoned by some exiles from Samos, who asked them to overthrow Polycrates and restore them to power. These exiles had been tricked into leaving Samos by Polycrates (3.44–5). Polycrates had secretly sent a message to Cambyses asking that he request a Samian force for his Egyptian campaign. Cambyses complied and Polycrates then selected those of the Samian citizens whom he most suspected of dissent and sent them on forty triremes to Egypt, instructing Cambyses not to send them back. The men on the ships soon realized what had happened and decided to return to attack Polycrates. Herodotus then breaks into his narrative to register his disagreement with those who say that the exiles defeated Polycrates by themselves. Why, he asks, would they have subsequently requested aid from the Spartans? Furthermore, Herodotus asserts that it is unlikely that so few exiles could have defeated Polycrates since he was supported by many mercenaries and native archers. In addition, Herodotus notes, Polycrates had the wives and children of the citizens who remained in Samos imprisoned in ship-sheds and threatened to burn them if the citizens betrayed him to the exiles.

Since several elements of this account are common to other tyrant stories in the *Histories* and Greek literature in general, it is likely that Herodotus' account of Polycrates is influenced by widespread anti-tyrannical traditions. While negative representations of tyranny may have originated in the traditions told by aristocratic factions about

[11] For a standard narrative of Greek history 525–479, see Boardman et al. (1988).
[12] For Polycrates, see further Chs. 6, pp. 124–6, and 22, p. 503, this volume.

their opponents, by the fifth century they had been adopted into *polis*-wide traditions, both popular and official traditions. Thus the exiled Samian aristocrats may have been the original source of traditions about Polycrates, but Herodotus probably incorporates elements of what had become the popular and official Samian version of the tyranny, which in turn was influenced by the traditions of other anti-tyrannical *poleis*.[13] The clever trick by which Polycrates gets rid of his political opponents, for instance, was a standard feature of the representation of tyranny in the fifth century and served to validate non-tyrannical political systems by characterizing tyrants as both deceptive and brutal towards their subjects.[14] Trickery and brutality feature most prominently in the stories of Peisistratus of Athens and Cypselus and Periander of Corinth.[15] The particular trick as well as the language of the Polycrates story, however, most closely resemble Herodotus' account of King Apries of Egypt. The Egyptians were led to revolt, according to Herodotus, because they believed that Apries deliberately sent them against Cyrene in order that they might perish and he might rule the rest of the Egyptians more securely (2.161.4, cf. 4.159.6).[16]

The imprisonment of the children and wives of the Samian citizens and Polycrates' threat to burn them alive is paralleled in Herodotus' account of the tyrannies of Peisistratus and Periander. Peisistratus took hostages from the children of the Athenians who did not go into exile from his regime (1.64.1) and Periander burned the clothes of all the women of Corinth to propitiate his wife's ghost (5.92η.3). These accounts of tyrannical brutality would have helped

[13] See Mitchell (1975) for the view that the Samian exiles were the source for Herodotus' account. For a demonstration of how an archaic anti-tyrannical aristocratic tradition can be adopted and adapted by a fifth-century anti-tyrannical *polis* tradition, see Forsdyke (1999).

[14] For the representation of tyranny in Greek literature, cf. n. 53 below. For the view that Herodotus' tyrants conform to a fifth-century pattern in which they are negative exempla for the political values of fifth-century Greeks, see Lateiner (1989) 163–86.

[15] Each of Peisistratus' three attempts at tyranny involve trickery (1.59–64). His final and most successful attempt results in the death and exile of Athenians as well as the taking of children as hostages (1.64). For Cypselus see Hdt. 5.92ε.2 and Nicolaus of Damascus *FGrH* 90 F 57. For Periander, see Hdt. 5.92ζ.2, with the discussion below, pp. 542–5.

[16] Note also that Cypselus was said to have sent his political opponents off to colonies 'in order that he might rule the rest more easily' (Nicolaus of Damascus *FGrH* 90 F 57) and Periander is said to have asked 'how he might govern his city best and most securely' and is told to 'get rid of' his rivals (5.92ζ.2).

to excuse the citizenry in the fifth century for their failure to resist the tyrant in the archaic period. Herodotus' own account of the defence of Samos against the Spartans, however, suggests that Polycrates had widespread popular support,[17] as was the case for the other tyrants about whom anti-tyrannical *polis* traditions arose in the fifth century.

Modern historians accept that the Spartan mission against Polycrates was prompted by exiled aristocrats who had guest-friendship ties with Spartan aristocrats.[18] Aristocratic factions often appealed to their foreign allies for help in their domestic political struggles and archeological evidence confirms strong ties between Sparta and Samos in this period.[19] Whether the Samian aristocrats were compelled to leave Samos by Polycrates or whether they went of their own accord to Sparta to seek aid is not ultimately knowable.[20] It is likely, however, that the political tradition in which this story was preserved elaborated in ideologically pointed ways on the historical fact of an appeal by Samian aristocrats to Sparta for assistance in overthrowing Polycrates.

The next part of Herodotus' narrative suggests several different types of tradition. When the Samian exiles reached Sparta they made a long speech begging for aid before the ephors. When they finished speaking, the ephors said they had forgotten what they had said at the beginning of the speech and did not understand what they had said at the end of it (3.46). On a second appearance, the Samians brought a bag and said the bag needed grain. The Spartans then said that the bag was superfluous, but agreed to help them. The Spartans sent a large force and besieged Samos, with the help of

[17] Cf. the aid of 'many of the Samians themselves' (αὐτῶν Σαμίων συχνοί) at 3.54.2.

[18] These ties may date back at least as far as the Messenian Wars, since the Samians themselves apparently explained Spartan aid against Polycrates as a return for Samian help to the Spartans against the Messenians (3.47.1). The Spartan claim that their expedition against Polycrates was retribution for an ancient theft (3.47.1), makes little historical sense and, as Nino Luraghi has argued in an unpublished paper, can be explained by Sparta's need to obscure its special relationship with Samos and its willingness to help Samos in 441 against Athens in violation of the Thirty Years' Peace.

[19] On the use of guest-friendship ties to acquire foreign troops for an aristocrat's domestic political struggles, see Herman (1987) 97–105. On aristocratic ties between Sparta and Samos at this time, see Cartledge (1982).

[20] Shipley (1987) 97 suggests that the exiles were given the opportunity to leave and gladly took it up.

the Corinthians (3.48, 54). The Spartans were driven back by Polycrates' mercenaries and the Samians themselves, as well as Polycrates himself (3.54). Two Spartans, Archias and Lycopes, performed especially bravely but the siege was unsuccessful. The Spartans left after forty days. Herodotus reports a story that he doesn't believe, namely that Polycrates made fake coins and bribed the Spartans to leave (3.56.2). The Samian exiles then gave up and decided to settle elsewhere. They first extracted money from the Siphnians by force, then bought an island off the Peloponnese and handed it over to the Troezenians. They then founded a city in Crete but were later driven out by the Aeginetans and the Cretans. The Aeginetans sawed off the prows of the captured Samian ships and dedicated them in the temple of Athena on Aegina (3.57–9).

The story of the Samian exiles' encounter with the Spartan ephors is in accord with the pattern of representation of Sparta as being hostole to speechmaking. Representations of Spartan laconism probably reflect the disciplined and authoritarian nature of the Spartan social and political system.[21] Yet, as Ellen Millender (2001) argues, this feature is probably sharpened in this and other anecdotes to emphasize the contrast between democratic Athens and oligarchic Sparta, and hence the anecdote may be influenced by democratic ideology. The only historically secure element of the story is that the Spartans did in fact agree to help the Samians. The stories of individual bravery of Spartans during the siege of Sparta, furthermore, are derived from family traditions which Herodotus heard at Sparta, as Herodotus explicitly mentions in the case of Archias (3.55.2). The story of Polycrates' bribery may be a tradition invented to explain the gilded lead coins which archaeologists have discovered.[22] It is not uncommon for traditions to be invented in order to explain artefacts and practices whose origins are no longer remembered.[23] Finally, Herodotus' account of the later wandering of the Samian exiles incorporates information which he must have gathered from Delphi (concerning the Siphnians) and from Aegina (concerning the Samian

[21] See Cartledge (1978) 34: 'it is extremely doubtful whether there was ever much debate in the Spartan Assembly'.

[22] This tradition, furthermore, neatly dovetails with the other traditions representing tyrannical trickery. For the coins, see Barron (1966) 17.

[23] Cf. Stahl (1987) 22–3.

colonization of Crete). It is noteworthy that, in contrast to the earlier narrative which represented the Samian exiles as innocent victims of a tyrant, here the exiles are represented negatively as extorting money from the Siphnians and violently driving people out of their lands. This unflattering portrait is in accord with non-Samian sources, such as Delphic and Aeginetan traditions.[24]

Herodotus' narrative of the Spartan expedition against Samos provides a case study in his historical methods. Herodotus utilizes many different traditions to construct his account, including family, popular, and official *polis* traditions. He sometimes records multiple versions of the same event and occasionally questions versions which he judges implausible (e.g., the exiles were too few in number to defeat Polycrates alone). Affinities between Herodotus' account of Polycrates and stories about other tyrants, moreover, are most likely a result of the influence of the traditions of different *poleis* on one another. Herodotus himself may have further sharpened such parallels in order to create vivid examples of the unaccountability of tyranny as theorized in his 'Constitutional Debate' (ἀνεύθυνος, 3.80).

The Ionian Revolt

The next important event Greek history narrated by Herodotus is the Ionian Revolt (499–494), when the Eastern Greeks tried unsuccessfully to throw off the yoke of Persia and were aided by Athens and Eretria. The relevance of this episode to Herodotus' history is explicitly stated: the Ionian Revolt was one of the immediate causes of the subsequent invasions launched by Persia against Greece. Specifically, Athens' participation in the burning of Sardis caused first Darius and then Xerxes to turn his attention to mainland Greece (5.97.3; 5.105; 7.5.2; 7.8β). Of utmost importance for Greek historians, however, is that Herodotus uses the appeal of the Ionian Greeks for help from the mainland Greeks as an occasion to recount the history of Sparta and Athens in the years leading up to the revolt. Thus, within the narrative of the Ionian Revolt, we get capsule his-

[24] The geographical locations of the successive settlements as well as the evident concern of the Aeginetans over the actions of the Samians suggest that these settlements were strategically placed to control trading routes. See Figueira (1985) 53.

tories of what Herodotus and his sources thought important about this period of mainland Greek history; these will be discussed later.

Herodotus' account of the Ionian Revolt presents a difficult problem for historians. Scholars agree that the desire for freedom from Persia and internal political freedom (democracy) in the East Greek cities were fundamental factors in the revolt.[25] These were causes of which Herodotus approved and which he should have been glad to emphasize. Yet instead, Herodotus focuses on the personal motives of the leaders of the revolt, Aristagoras and Histiaeus of Miletus. Modern historians believe that this focus distorts his account of the causes and course of the revolt to an unacceptable degree. Instead of criticizing Herodotus, however, it is more useful to ask why Herodotus chose this emphasis. More precisely, did he choose this emphasis or were these critical traditions the only ones available? If the latter, then we must explain why there were no traditions which emphasized the heroism of the Eastern Greek cities in revolting against the mighty Persian empire.[26]

The answer is probably that the failure of the revolt influenced the nature of the traditions about it.[27] Rather than producing an account of unified action in defence of Greek freedom, the traditions of the cities and individuals involved were concerned to defend themselves and blame others for the defeat. There was, however, some common ground in these traditions. All Ionians, it seems, could agree that Aristagoras, Histiaeus, and the other Ionian tyrants had acted in their own self-interest, and were not truly interested the cause of Greek freedom. It was from these critical traditions that Herodotus constructed his account.

Modern historians believe that the underlying causes of the revolt probably included the increasing demands on the East Greeks for military service and tribute as well as declining economic prosperity due to the disruption of trade by Persian expansionism.[28] Herodotus does not cite these issues as causes of the revolt although it is from his account that we can infer that these must have been significant

[25] See the analyses of Tozzi (1978) and Murray (1988).

[26] With this absence of positive traditions about the Ionian Revolt we might compare the traditions about the Phocaeans and the Teans who in 546 refused to submit to the Persians and instead migrated to the West. Herodotus calls these men *agathoi* and explictly praises them for their desire for freedom (1.169).

[27] Lang (1968) 24; Murray (1988) 471.

[28] Tozzi (1978) 114–76 and Murray (1988).

factors. He does record the immediate cause of the revolt: the appeal of some exiled Naxian aristocrats for aid to Aristagoras, the acting tyrant of Miletus. Aristagoras agreed to help because he thought that he might add Naxos to his dominion (5.30.3). He then appealed to the Persians for help, pointing out to them that Naxos was the key to conquest of the Cyclades and Euboea (5.31.2–3). As many have recognized, in this speech of Aristagoras, Herodotus shows awareness of the imperial aims of Persia and provides a plausible explanation of Persian actions at this time, namely, that Darius seized the opportunity of civic *stasis* to conquer Naxos and begin expansion towards Greece. Herodotus, however, keeps his narrative focus on Aristagoras in a way which is consistent both with oral techniques of narration and with his sources' desire for a scapegoat.

When the siege of Naxos failed, Aristagoras was left in an awkward position: he was unable to fulfil his promises to the Persians, he owed a lot of money to the army, and he feared he would be deposed at Miletus as a consequence (5.35.1–2). He decided, therefore, to become leader of a revolt against Persia. Herodotus emphasizes both here (5.37.1) and later (5.98.1), that Aristagoras' motive was not to help Ionia, but to maintain his own position and harm Darius. It is quite likely that after the failure of the Naxian expedition, Aristagoras did indeed find his position as puppet tyrant untenable and was driven to revolt mainly by this fact. However, his establishment of *isonomia* at Miletus and his overthrow of tyrants in other Ionian cities in order gain popular favour (5.37.2) show that there was widespread hostility to the Persian-backed tyrants and a desire for a more egalitarian political system. The establishment of democracies in the Ionian cities by Mardonius in 492 (6.43), moreover, attests to the demand for political reform in Ionia in the 490s.

Herodotus' accounts of the activities of the other leader of the revolt, Histiaeus, the former tyrant of Miletus, are somewhat puzzling. It is noteworthy that nowhere in Herodotus' account are Histiaeus' actions really important to the outcome of events. He is merely a fellow-instigator, a slippery advisor to Darius and ultimately a failed rebel who acts largely on his own. Furthermore, the only real consistency in the narratives is Histiaeus' cleverness. These two features of the Histiaeus story suggest that Herodotus' account derives from popular traditions which were mainly concerned to illustrate Greek cleverness (*mētis*; Murray (1988) 486). Thus we get the story of the message tattooed into a slave's skull (5.35.3) as well as Histiaeus'

deception of Darius (5.106–7) and of the Ionians themselves (6.3). The failure of the revolt may explain the lack of a consistent political position in Histiaeus' character as well as the inconsequentiality of the Histiaeus narratives; all that is remembered in the tradition (or invented to fit the needs of the tellers) are stories illustrating Greek cleverness, particularly Greek cleverness exercised against Persia.

Herodotus' account of the final sea battle at Lade reveals its origins in the oral traditions of the defeated Ionian cities. Herodotus himself comments that he is unable to give a good account of the battle, because all the reports are confused and everyone blames everyone else (7.14.1). Many historians, however, have pointed to Samian sources for Herodotus' account since Herodotus explicitly mentions the eleven Samian ships which were honoured for not defecting (6.14.2–3). He also mentions the dislike of some Samian aristocrats for the behaviour of their generals at Lade and the consequent departure of these aristocrats on a colonizing enterprise in order not to become subject to the Persians (6.22.1). It may be that the story of the Phocaean general Dionysius, who unsuccessfully attempted to put the Ionians through rigorous training for battle, may be a post-defeat adaptation designed to excuse the Samians for their departure (Murray (1988) 488). Herodotus' report of the bravery of the Chians and their unfortunate fate (6.15–16), on the other hand, is likely derived from an apologetic Chian tradition. Finally, although the Persians were undoubtedly helped by the Ionian tyrants who had fled to Persia after their deposition, their infiltration of the Ionian army and the way that they threaten the Ionians with typical oriental punishments help to excuse the Ionians for deserting and thus may originate in Ionian *polis* traditions.[29]

Spartan History c. *525–499*

In his quest for external support for the revolt, Aristagoras first appealed to Sparta. Aristagoras' appeal provides Herodotus with the opportunity for his second digression on Sparta in his *Histories* (5.39–54).[30] Herodotus picks up Spartan history with the accession

[29] Cf. 6.32, where the Persians fulfil their threats, castrating the Ionian boys and sending the girls to the king, while burning the Ionian cities and temples.

[30] For the first digression, see Ch. 22, esp. pp. 515–16, this volume.

of Cleomenes to the Spartan throne *c.* 520 and provides some dynastic history. The story of Cleomenes' reign is continued in Herodotus' account of affairs in Aegina immediately before Darius invasion in 490 (see below). Since the narratives on Cleomenes include both positive and negative elements, some historians believe that Herodotus' sources must have been the rival royal families; others think that these stories give an official *polis* view.[31] If we accept the more recent view that family tradition need not be opposed to official or popular *polis* tradition, but instead the two types of tradition may influence and incorporate elements from each other, then the ambiguities in the tradition are easier to explain. Moreover, it is likely that Herodotus did not rely on a single source but had access to family, official *polis* and, particularly in the account of Cleomenes, gruesome death, popular *polis* traditions. The ways that these different traditions relate and adapt to one another, as well as how Herodotus shapes them to the needs of his narrative are some of the most significant areas for future research.

Cleomenes' encounter with Aristagoras bears all the marks of a Greek moralizing tradition and also appears to have been shaped by Herodotus' own conceptual framework. After a brief appeal to the notions of freedom and kinship, Aristagoras tries to tempt the Spartan king by describing the inferiority of the Persian army and the wealth of the Eastern lands (5.49.2–8). Why should the Spartans fight against their formidable Peloponnesian adversaries over a small and infertile land when Persia is rich and easily conquered? If they conquer Susa, they will 'rival Zeus in wealth' (5.49.7). Aristagoras is thus made to appeal to desires which are extremely dangerous in Spartan and Greek value systems. According to Greek beliefs, a fertile landscape causes softness in its inhabitants and is associated with a servile spirit.[32] Furthermore, the attempt to rival the gods always meets with disaster.[33] Given the prominence of these values in the *Histories* and in Greek thought in general, it is difficult to determine

[31] For the former view see Jeffery (1988) and Evans (1991) 125. In a variation on this view see Cartledge (1979) 143. For the view that Herodotus' account of Cleomenes' reign derives from a *polis* tradition, see Murray (1987) 104 who writes 'Spartan tradition, even in so far as it relates to the kings, seems to be unconnected with families, but rather to give an official polis view of the past which it would be easier to attribute to a group aware of the need for social cohesion.'

[32] See 7.102.1 and 9.122.3–4; Democritus F 251 DK; Hippocrates *Airs, Waters, Places* 24.

[33] See below, ch. 24, pp. 560–1, this volume.

whether their expression here is due to Herodotus or his sources. One might think that Cleomenes' rejection of Aristagoras' suit indicates a pro-Cleomenes tradition. Yet Cleomenes only rejects Aristagoras on learning how far Susa was from the sea (5.50). Furthermore, when Aristagoras tries to bribe Cleomenes with fifty talents, Cleomenes has to be prompted by his young daughter Gorgo to go away (5.51.2). This last element suggests a popular tradition which was not part of the royal family tradition. We may surmise that this popular tradition elaborated in morally pointed ways upon the historical fact that Sparta did not participate in the Ionian revolt. Like the traditions from which he draws, however, Herodotus himself is concerned with the contrast between soft and hard cultures, as well as the distinction between divine and mortal.[34] The resonances between this passage and other passages in the *Histories* show that the moral tone of this narrative is not due solely to Herodotus' sources, but is pointed up in his narrative to evoke some of the major themes of his work. Modern historians, on the other hand, explain Sparta's failure to help with the Ionian Revolt by its troubles with its allies in 506 and its continuing rivalry with Argos.

Athenian History 514–499

Aristagoras' appeal was more successful in Athens than it had been in Sparta. Crucial factors in Athens' decision to help the Ionians were probably Athens' kinship ties with the Ionians (mentioned briefly by Aristagoras, 5.97.2), as well as Athens' support for *isonomia*. Herodotus, however, has Aristagoras make the same arguments that he made at Sparta, namely the good things that Asia could offer if conquered and the ease with which the Persians could be beaten (5.97.1). Although Herodotus does not directly praise the Spartans for their rejection of Aristagoras' suit, Herodotus feels compelled to comment on Athens' agreement to help. He concludes that it seems to be easier to deceive (διαβάλλειν) many men than one, since Aristagoras had not been able to deceive Cleomenes but was able to deceive thirty thousand Athenians (5.97.2). Many commentators have taken this passage as an indication of Herodotus' critical view of the

[34] On soft and hard cultures, see Gould (1989) 58–60. On divine and mortal see Chs. 8 and 9, pp. 220–4, this volume.

Athenian democracy. Yet, as we shall see, Herodotus records versions of Athenian history which confirm the beneficial effects of democracy on Athens. This contradiction is probably due to the different traditions that Herodotus depends upon. The negative view reflects a critical view of the Ionian revolt and its supporters, including Aristagoras and the Athenians; the positive view of the Athenian democracy, on the other hand, reflects the legitimizing traditions of the Athenian democracy. Herodotus himself, of course, must have been aware of this contradiction in his sources about the value of the Athenian democracy. As is clear from the 'Constitutional Debate' (3.80–2) as well as his accounts of kings and tyrants, Herodotus was not an uncritical propagandist for a particular political system, but rather was concerned to use his historical inquiries to explore the strengths and weaknesses of systems of political organization.[35]

Herodotus' account of Athens at the time of Aristagoras' embassy includes key moments in Athens' recent political development (notably the establishment of a democracy) and an account of Athens' recent relations with other Greek states (in particular, Sparta and Aegina). Once again, a key question is how far this selection of material reflects Herodotus' choices or the choices of the traditions available to him. Once again, the answer is probably both. Some elements of Herodotus' account can be shown to reflect the Athenians' understanding of the importance of their political system to their history; other elements suggest the influence of Herodotus' own view of the value of political freedom.

Until recently, scholars accepted the view of Jacoby that Herodotus relied primarily on the family traditions of the Alcmeonidae for his account of the overthrow of the tyranny and Athenian history in general (Jacoby (1913), (1949)). More recently, scholars have begun to argue for the presence of a more complex set of traditions in Herodotus' account.[36] Not only are aristocratic family traditions present, it is argued, but broader *polis* traditions. This new perspective on Herodotus' oral sources is based partly on the recognition that family and *polis* traditions are not mutually exclusive, and partly on the observation that parts of Herodotus' account are not at all com-

[35] For Herodotus as a political theorist, see Saxonhouse (1996) and Thompson (1996).

[36] See especially Thomas (1989) 238–82 and Lavelle (1993) 74–108; also Develin (1985).

plimentary to the Alcmeonid family and therefore would have been dropped from the tradition if it were preserved solely by that family. Although most scholars would not go so far, I would argue that the Athenians' collective belief in the value of their democratic political system has influenced Herodotus' version of Athens' history and hence that specifically *democratic polis* traditions lie behind his account.

Herodotus begins with an account of how Athens was liberated from the tyranny of the sons of Pisistratus (5.55). At the time of the overthrow of the tyranny, Herodotus explains, Hippias was tyrant. His brother, Hipparchus, had recently been killed and this had affected the manner of Hippias' rule. Herodotus does not delve into details of Hipparchus' death or the motivations of Hipparchus' killers. He simply notes that after the death of Hipparchus, the Athenians were ruled for four more years by Hippias, who ruled more tyrannically after the murder than before. It is clear from Thucydides' vehement refutation of popular Athenian views of the tyrannicides as liberators of Athens (Thuc. 6.54–9), that Hipparchus' murderers were credited with the overthrow of the tyranny in some traditions.[37] This is not surprising since it is a common feature of oral traditions to collapse two distinct historical events into one.[38] Yet it is evident from Herodotus' account that there were other versions of the end of the tyranny and, in particular, that the crucial role of the Spartans was not forgotten by some. Herodotus rejects the simplified version in which Harmodius and Aristogeiton are liberators (cf. 6.123) and accepts another version, namely that the Alcmeonidae bribed the Delphic oracle to persuade the Spartans to overthrow the tyrants (5.63). When the Spartans gave in to the repeated requests of the oracle, they, along with some Athenians, drove the tyrants from Athens (5.63–5). Since Herodotus gives all credit to the Alcmeonidae and the Spartans (cf. 6.123), it has been thought that Herodotus relied on the family tradition of the Alcmeonidae. In fact, both the tyrannicides-as-liberators and the Spartans/Alcmeonids-as-liberators versions may have been *polis* traditions. As Thomas has shown ((1989) 250–1), oral societies can have multiple, even contradictory, versions

[37] The idea that the tyrannicides-as-liberators version was promoted by an anti-Alcmeonid faction and specifically Themistocles' faction is no longer considered plausible (Thomas (1989) 238–51; Raaflaub (1988a) 200).

[38] See Thomas (1989) 133–5, 138–44, 224–6 and Raaflaub (1988a) 202, 222 on this feature of oral traditions.

of a given historical tradition. As long as the two versions are told on different occasions, the contradiction is not considered important.

As Thomas has pointed out, although the Alcmeonid family tradition no doubt preserved the memory of its role in these events, it is unlikely that their version would have highlighted so prominently the dishonourable fact of their bribery of the Delphic oracle.[39] It is likely that the detail of bribery would have been de-emphasized and eventually dropped from their version of events. In Herodotus' version, however, this is the only deed that the Alcmeonidae are explicitly credited with, apart from their unsuccessful earlier attempts to overthrow the tyrants.[40] Even though the Alcmeonidae probably led the Athenian force which helped the Spartans overthrow the tyranny (5.64.2), they are not mentioned by name. Instead, Herodotus designates the Athenian force as 'those Athenians who wished to be free'. The anonymity of this phrase recalls other instances under the Athenian democracy where individual achievements are subsumed under the anonymous collective label 'the Athenians'.[41] These features of Herodotus' version diminish the role of the Alcmeonidae and emphasize collective action by the Athenians.[42] This suggests that Herodotus' version contains elements of a wider *polis* tradition. The role of the Spartans and the Alcmeonidae in the overthrow of the tyranny was presumably historical and remembered by too many people to be covered up.[43] Nevertheless, the tradition does what it can to show the Athenians acting against the tyrants and is not particularly concerned to note Alcmeonid leadership.

Herodotus' account of the establishment of the democracy in Athens similarly seems to derive from a *polis* tradition. The nature of the tradition is suggested by the remarks which frame Herodotus' account:

> Athens, although it was a great city even before, became even greater when it was liberated from the tyrants. (5.66.1)

[39] Thomas (1989) 248–50; Evans (1991) 126; although see Develin (1985) 128.

[40] 5.62.2–63.1; 5.66.1; 6.123. For their earlier unsuccessful efforts: 5.62.2.

[41] For example, in the epigram on the bronze chariot which commemorated the victory over the Boeotians and Chalcidians (5.77.4).

[42] The emphasis on collective Athenian action is even more prominent in fourth-century versions, see Thomas (1989) 196–237, 251–7.

[43] Aristophanes gives all the credit to the Spartans in what appears to be a popular tradition about the overthrow of the tyrants in *Lysistrata* 1150–6 (see Thomas (1989) 245–7). Herodotus also mentions the tomb of Anchimolius (Spartan com-

> It is clear that democracy (ἰσηγορίη)[44] is an excellent thing not just in one aspect but in every way. For the Athenians, when ruled by tyrants, were not better than any of their neighbours in war, but when they had rid themselves of the tyrants, they were first by far. This shows, therefore, that when they were held down by a tyrant they were cowardly, on the grounds that they were working for a master, but when they had been liberated (ἐλευθερωθέντων) each man was eager to work for himself. (5.78)

Although the latter remark is clearly made in Herodotus' own voice, the idea that political freedom, and specifically democratic freedom, had a beneficial effect on Athens is echoed throughout Herodotus' Athenian narrative as well as in other Athenian sources (Forsdyke (2001)). For this reason we may surmise that Herodotus' account derives at least in part from official and popular *polis* traditions which sought to legitimate democratic government by using Athens' past to show the benefits of democratic rule. Nevertheless, the association between political freedom and civic strength is also part of Herodotus' own conceptual framework and once again it is difficult to separate Herodotus' shaping of the tradition from that of his sources.[45]

To argue that Herodotus' account is influenced by democratic *polis* traditions is not to say that Herodotus' account is pure jingoistic ideology. Herodotus and his sources worked with genuine historical memories of this period. Many aspects of his account, moreover, fit with what we know of the political conditions of archaic Greece. In particular, Herodotus' account of the immediate aftermath of the overthrow of the tyranny is believable in terms of what we know of the political structure and history of the archaic Greek states. In Athens, as well as other *poleis*, there was a constant struggle for dominance among rival groups of aristocrats in the seventh and sixth

mander of the first expedition against the tyrants) in a deme where Alcmeonids resided (5.63.4), a monument which may have helped to preserve the memory of the role of the Spartans and the Alcmeonids.

[44] Herodotus uses the term ἰσηγορίη (*isēgoriē*, 'equal right to speak') to denote the Athenian democracy by synecdoche. In the context, it is clear that Herodotus is speaking of the Athenian democracy. Herodotus rarely uses the term δημοκρατίη (*dēmokratiē*). He uses it only once of the Athenian democracy (6.131.4), and once more of the establishment of democracies in the cities of Ionia after the Ionian revolt (6.43.3, cf. his use of the verb δημοκρατέεσθαι at 6.43.3 and 4.137.2). Herodotus uses other terms to denote democracy such as ἰσονομίη (*isonomiē*, 3.80.6, 3.142.3) and/or circumlocutions such as πάντα . . . ἐς μέσον τῷ δήμῳ ἔθηκε (4.161.3) and ἐς μέσον τὴν ἀρχὴν τιθείς (3.142.3).

[45] On relation between civic strength and political freedom in the *Histories* see Gray (1997).

centuries. The leaders of successful factions often became tyrants; unsuccessful factions either submitted to the rule of the tyrant or went into exile to gather forces for their return.[46]

Herodotus records such a situation of violence between rival aristocratic factions after the overthrow of the tyranny. So much is agreed by modern scholars. The rest of his account is disputed. Some scholars believe that Herodotus' version is so vitiated by the effects of oral tradition that the history of the transition to democracy is not recoverable (see Raaflaub (1998b) 87–8). Most scholars take a more moderate position: Herodotus does indeed preserve something of the historical events, but extreme care must be taken to compensate for the effects of the oral traditions which were his sources. Two issues have dominated recent work on Herodotus' account of the events of 508/7 BC. First is the question of what types of oral traditions lie behind Herodotus' account and hence what sorts of distortions the account has undergone. Second, a new debate has arisen over what Herodotus' account implies about the roles of elites and masses in the transition to democracy. Let us begin with a summary.

Cleisthenes of the family of the Alcmeonidae and Isagoras of another leading aristocratic family fought over power after the overthrow of the tyrants. Cleisthenes was being worsted in the struggle and 'took the people into his faction' (τὸν δῆμον προσεταιρίζεται). With the support of the people, Cleisthenes won power over Isagoras. He then changed the tribes from four to ten (i.e., passed democratic reforms, cf. 6.131.1). Cleisthenes changed the names of the tribes in imitation of his uncle Cleisthenes of Sicyon who similarly changed the names of some tribes in his city. Next Isagoras called on his Spartan guest-friend Cleomenes to help him regain power. Cleomenes sent a herald to Athens demanding that Cleisthenes and his supporters go into exile on the grounds that they were polluted as a result of their murder of the adherents of Cylon during a similar bout of aristocratic infighting in the late seventh century. Cleisthenes then left Athens. When Cleomenes arrived in Athens with a small force he drove out an additional 700 families and attempted to dissolve the Council and give power to Isagoras and three hundred of his supporters. The Council resisted and, in response, Cleomenes and Isagoras retreated to the acropolis. The rest of the Athenians

[46] On aristocratic *stasis* in the archaic Greek *poleis* and its relation to the development of democracy at Athens, see Forsdyke (2000).

('Αθηναίων οἱ λοιποί), thinking the same thing (τὰ αὐτὰ φρονήσαντες), besieged the Spartans and Isagoras on the acropolis for two days. On the third day, the Spartans left Athens under a truce. The Athenians condemned Isagoras' supporters to death and recalled Cleisthenes and the other exiled families. Realizing that the Spartans would retaliate, the Athenians decided to send envoys to Persia to make an alliance. Artaphernes, the Persian governor at Sardis, demanded that Athens surrender her autonomy to Persia in return for an alliance. The envoys gave tokens of submission and were severely blamed for this when they returned to Athens (5.66–73).

This account has raised many questions. The traditional interpretation of Herodotus' narrative is that the democracy was brought about by self-interested aristocrats as a new tactic their on-going political struggles, and that Cleisthenes cleverly exploited popular favour to defeat his elite rival.[47] On this interpretation, the Athenian people gave only passive support to Cleisthenes in the assembly when he proposed his reforms.[48] Furthermore, it is noted that the people did not resist the expulsion of Cleisthenes as they might have done if they had had an active desire for democratic reform. It was only when Cleomenes tried to disband the Council that resistance began, and this has been taken as an indication that it was aristocratic leaders on the Council who directed 'the rest of the Athenians' in the subsequent siege of Isagoras and Cleomenes on the acropolis. Supporters of this view of the events of 508/7 argue that only the hoplite class lies behind Herodotus' term 'the rest of the Athenians' and that therefore Herodotus' account does not suggest widespread political consciousness among the Athenian masses. Moreover, the Athenian people had not resisted the tyranny of Peisistratus (despite the claims of later traditions) and there is no evidence that they would have objected to Isagoras' rule had it not been for Cleisthenes and other aristocratic leaders.

In a critique of this interpretation, Josiah Ober has pointed to the key role of the *dēmos* in Herodotus' account and argued that this reflects the role of the citizens as a whole, including the lowest social classes, in the establishment of the democracy.[49] After noting that

[47] See Raaflaub (1998a, b) and Eder (1998) for recent statements of this view.

[48] For a reconstruction of the legislative procedures of the reform, see Andrewes (1977).

[49] Originally argued in Ober (1993); restated in Ober (1998).

Cleisthenes must have proposed his reforms to an assembly which was aware of the potential of the reforms to 'provide them with the institutional means to express more fully their growing sense of themselves as citizens' ((1993) 218), Ober makes two central arguments based on Herodotus' account. First, he notes that Isagoras' aristocratic rivals had been driven into exile by the time of the resistance to Isagoras and the Spartans and thus could not have led the revolt. The expulsion of Cleisthenes and 700 families had been carefully planned by Isagoras so as to get rid of all the likely leaders of resistance to his coup (5.70.2, 72.1). Second, Ober notes that it was the corporate entities of the Council and the 'rest of the Athenians' who resisted Isagoras and the Spartans and caused the recall of Cleisthenes and his supporters. On this basis, he argues that the subsequent establishment of the Athenian democracy was 'the product of collective decision, action and self-definition on the part of the *dēmos* itself' ((1993) 216). Although the political consciousness of the Athenian *dēmos* had been developing throughout the sixth century, Ober argues that it crystallized in the crisis of the Spartan invasion engineered by Isagoras.

A key issue in deciding between these two interpretations is the nature of the traditions on which Herodotus' account is based as well as Herodotus' own narrative aims. Would Herodotus and his sources have tended to emphasize either aristocratic or democratic action? Ober accepts the traditional view that much of Herodotus' account must come from aristocratic family tradition; he argues on this basis that such traditions would have remembered aristocratic leadership if there had been any ((1993) 221). Yet as we have seen, many scholars have begun to question Herodotus' dependence on aristocratic family traditions. The framing comments to Herodotus' narrative suggest that a democratic *polis* tradition lies behind Herodotus' account; moreover, Herodotus' own valuation of political freedom would have led him to accept elements of the tradition with emphasized the effectiveness of democratic action. If we discard the idea that Herodotus relies on aristocratic tradition, and instead posit a *polis* tradition as Herodotus' source then the fact that his account does not indicate aristocratic leadership may be attributable to his sources' aims (the validation of democratic power) and not to history.

Several other features of Herodotus' account contribute to the impression that he relied on *polis* traditions and not aristocratic family traditions. First of all it is significant that Cleisthenes does not

play a particularly heroic role (cf. Lavelle (1993) 101). He engages in aristocratic factionalism and only appeals to the people when it is clear that he is losing. When Cleomenes demands Cleisthenes' expulsion, Cleisthenes withdraws. There is no mention of an attempt by Cleisthenes to gather forces for a counter-attack. Instead, it is only after the anonymous Council and 'rest of the Athenians' act, that Cleomenes is defeated and Cleisthenes and his supporters are allowed to return. Ober is thus correct to draw attention to the emphasis on collective action by the Athenian masses *in Herodotus' account*. However, if Herodotus' account is, or includes elements of, a *polis* tradition, then the role of the *dēmos* may be exaggerated in accordance with fifth-century hostility to tyranny and valuation of the political power of the *dēmos*.[50] We must, therefore, be cautious about inferring anything about the political consciousness and role of the people as a whole in the late sixth century. Subsequent episodes of Herodotus' narrative do suggest a democratic *polis* tradition in which individual leadership and accomplishment is forgotten and collective accomplishment is emphasized. The Athenians resoundingly defeat a three-pronged attack engineered by the Spartans, and, as we have seen, their success is attributed to their new political system. *Polis* pride in this victory was marked by four-horse bronze chariot with dedicatory inscription celebrating the victory of 'the sons of the Athenians' (5.74–78).

If the anonymity of the revolution is indeed attributable to the needs of a *polis* tradition, then the historical role of individual elites on the Council and among the Athenians may have been lost. Yet this view does not fully counter the argument that the role of the people in the establishment of the democracy was remembered because this is what actually happened. The people may have emphasized their role in the revolution both because it actually was important *and* because it suited their current political values. Furthermore, unlike previous instances of aristocratic factionalism, the events of 508/7 actually resulted in the reorganization of political power on a wholly new basis. It is a reasonable assumption that something must have been different about this instance of aristocratic in-fighting and Herodotus' own account indicates that that something was the role of a politically self-conscious and active *dēmos*. A self-directed, self-defining

[50] The role of the *dēmos* is emphasized also in Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* 273–82, which presumably reflects official and popular *polis* traditions.

popular revolution, therefore, is one way of explaining the extraordinary phenomenon of the creation of democracy at the end of the sixth century (Ober (1998) 73).

Although Herodotus mentions the new tribes and the redistribution of the demes within them (5.69.2), he does not discuss the institutional details of the reforms or Cleisthenes' intentions in proposing the reforms. The lack of constitutional detail as well as the claim that Cleisthenes was imitating his grandfather Cleisthenes of Sicyon, has led historians to ridicule his political understanding. Recent scholarship has shown more respect for Herodotus' political insight, and has rightly focussed on what Herodotus' omissions and emphasis tell us about his own and his sources' aims. Instead of constitutional detail, Herodotus' focus is the effect of political freedom on Athens' sub-se-quent history. This suggests that Herodotus was working from democratic *polis* traditions which were primarily concerned to legitimate Athens' contemporary political system. Herodotus' own valuation of political freedom would have led him to accept and indeed to emphasize these aspects of the tradition from which he drew his account.

The Spartans subsequently (*c.* 506) made an attempt to restore the tyranny to Athens. This episode, the grand finale to Herodotus' account of Athens at the time of the Ionian Revolt, shows in its language and themes that it derives from Athenian *polis* traditions and, I would argue, Athenian official and popular democratic traditions in particular. A prominent feature is a debate between Sparta and her allies which is in essence a discussion of political systems, just as is the Constitutional Debate in Book Three. This debate, however, is not conducted in abstract terms, but through an historical example: the tyranny of the Cypselids at Corinth (mythologized as the account given of it may be). Furthermore, this debate is not open-ended but rather results in the vindication of democracy over tyranny.

Although Herodotus' account is ultimately shaped to fit the political ideals of the Athenians, Athenian democratic traditions are not the only source for this complex and fascinating narrative. The narrative contains traditions of the Corinthians, in its account of the rise and rule of Cypselus, as well as what is probably a widespread, even Panhellenic tradition about the dangers of tyranny, in its anecdote about Thrasybulus' advice to Periander.[51] Indeed it is only the

[51] Murray (1987) 104 concludes that Delphi is probably the source of the tradition.

larger frame of these traditions—the defeat of a Spartan attempt to restore the tyranny to Athens—which seems to come directly from Athenian democratic *polis* traditions. Let us begin with the frame.

Herodotus provides two justifications of the Spartans, decision to try to restore the tyranny, each of which resonates against his famous statement about the association between democracy and civic strength quoted above. First the Spartans discovered that the Alcmeonidae had bribed the Delphic oracle which commanded them to expel the Peisistratids. The Spartans were aggrieved that they had harmed their guest-friends, and, moreover, had won no gratitude from the Athenians for it. Secondly, the Spartans had learned from oracular writings kept on the Athenian acropolis that they were destined to suffer harm from the Athenians. Herodotus elaborates on these alleged Spartan fears in the following way:

> The Spartans . . . saw that the Athenians were growing greater and were not prepared to obey them. They recognized that the Attic race, if free, would be equal in power to them, but, if held down by a tyrant, would be powerless and ready to obey. (5.91.1)

> "Agitated by false oracles, we expelled from their own country men who were close guest-friends to us and who undertook to keep Athens subservient. In doing this, we handed over the city to an ungrateful people, who, when they had been liberated by us, tossed up their heads and arrogantly drove us and our king out of their country. And now that they have established a reputation, they are growing in strength, as their neighbours, the Boeotians and Chalcideans have learned, and anyone else who wrongs them will quickly learn." (5.91.2)

This justification bears striking resemblance to Thucydides' claim that Sparta's real reason for starting the Peloponnesian War in 431 was 'its fear of the further growth of Athens, seeing, as they did, that already the greater part of Hellas was under the control of Athens' (1.88). Thus this motive in Herodotus seems to be influenced by later Spartan concerns. Yet the passages quoted above also express very clearly the connection between civic strength and democracy which structured Herodotus' earlier narrative and therefore may be similarly derived from Athenian democratic traditions. The Spartans are made to concur too strongly with Athenian claims about the value of their democracy for these passages to reflect actual Spartan views at the time. Historically, the Spartans were probably eager to put Athens in the hands of Hippias who could be counted on to co-operate.

Sparta's allies had been unsympathetic to an earlier attempt to restore Isagoras, and they were no more convinced by Sparta on this occasion. The Corinthian delegate made the case against Sparta's proposal. His speech takes up almost five pages of Herodotus' text and seems to be derived from multiple types of traditions. The essence of his argument is that the tyrant Cypselus and his son Periander secured their rule over the Corinthians through murder, banishments, and confiscations of property, among other acts of injustice against innocent Corinthians (5.92ε.2–η.1). Yet Socles begins with an account of Cypselus' birth which contains many details irrelevant to this argument. This part of the account may reflect popularized versions of what was once a Cypselid family tradition since it credits Cypselus with getting rid of the unjust Bacchiad family which ruled Corinth before the tyranny of Cypselus (5.92β.1–ε.1).[52] The centrepiece of Socles' political argument is the story of Periander's encounter with the tyrant Thrasybulus of Miletus (5.92.ζ–η) which he uses to illustrate the brutality of Periander's reign: the tyrant cut down innocent citizens just as Thrasybulus cut down the ears of grain in a wheat field. It is this anecdote, as well as the story of Periander's ill treatment of his own wife and the women of Corinth, which are Socles' prime examples of the injustice of tyranny. Socles' description of Cypselus and Periander corresponds with the theoretical critique of tyranny in the Constitutional Debate. A tyrant is 'not accountable and can do whatever he likes; he transgresses the established customs; he commits many terrible deeds due to hubris and envy; he overturns ancestral customs and rapes women and puts men to death without trial' (3.80.3–5). These characteristics of tyranny are also paralleled in other Greek literature, and especially Athenian tragedy.[53] Herodotus and the traditions which were his sources, therefore, seem to be drawing on widespread Greek ideas about the nature of tyranny.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that Socles' speech is made in order to prevent the Spartans from attempting to overthrow the

[52] The story of Cypselus' birth contains elements found in folklore traditions worldwide (cf. Murray (1987) 104 and 110 ff.). Herodotus' narratives of the births of Cyrus (1.108–16) and Pisistratus (1.59.1–3) share the pattern of divine portant preceding the birth of a powerful individual. The second oracle concerning Cypselus' birth (5.92β.3), however, is in accord with the general anti-tyrant theme of the speech as a whole, since it suggests that Cypselus will be responsible for the deaths of many Corinthians.

[53] See Lanza (1977) and Georgini (1993).

newly established democracy *at Athens*. Thus the *Athenian democracy* is the point of contrast and ultimate beneficiary of this diatribe against tyranny. This suggests that Athenian *polis* traditions may have co-opted Corinthian *polis* traditions or even Panhellenic anti-tyrannical traditions for their own democratic purposes. We have already seen that the Spartan justifications of their proposal betray traces of Athenian democratic *polis* traditions. Likewise Socles' arguments serve the interests of the Athenian democracy and it is likely that they derive from similar sources.[54]

Greek History 494–480

The final books of Herodotus' *Histories* are concerned with the Persian invasions of Greece. Within this narrative of the Persian Wars, however, Herodotus has reason to mention a few episodes of Greek history in the period 494–480 which are only tangentially related to the larger narrative. First of all, the Persian campaigns on the European side of the Hellespont give rise to a brief history of how the Athenian family of the Philaids under the leadership of Miltiades the Elder gained control of and ultimately were expelled from the Chersonnesus (6.33–41). The family of the Philaids is generally believed to be behind the version of events that Herodotus presents, since the account appears to be apologetic.[55] The trials of Miltiades the Younger *c.* 492 (for tyranny in the Chersonnesus) and in 489 (for deception of the *dēmos* after his failed Parian campaign), both mentioned by Herodotus, are thought to be the context in which such a tradition may have been formulated and disseminated.

Darius' demand for earth and water from the Greek cities, *c.* 492, leads to a digression on the Spartan kingship, since Aegina's medism at this time was the occasion for the perpetuation of the conflict between the two Spartan kings, Cleomenes and Demaratus. In this account, we can detect some positive elements in the traditions about

[54] For a discussion of the ideological influences on the Thrasybulus anecdote in Herodotus, see Forsdyke (1999).

[55] In particular, the claim that Miltiades was *invited* by the Dolonci to rule in the Chersonnesus (6.34–5), that Miltiades left Athens out of hatred for the tyranny of Pisistratus (6.35.3), and that Miltiades tried to persuade the Ionian tyrants to destroy the bridge during Darius' Scythian campaign (4.136) appear designed to defend him against charges of tyrannical inclinations.

Cleomenes, who acts promptly to prevent Aegina's medism and is thwarted by Demaratus. Herodotus comments that while Cleomenes was working for the good of Greece, Demaratus was at home slandering Cleomenes (6.61.1). Herodotus also records, however, that Cleomenes bribed the Delphic oracle to declare Demaratus illegitimate and thus caused Demaratus to flee to Persia (6.66–70). The portrait of Demaratus in the rest of the *Histories* is quite complimentary, considering that he was essentially a traitor to Greece. Demaratus gives Xerxes good advice for his invasion of Greece (7.235), yet also sends a message to Sparta warning of the immanent invasion (7.239). Demaratus, moreover, serves as a spokesman for Greek and especially Spartan values in the context of barbarian Persia. This ambiguous tradition seems to derive from the multiple needs of its tellers. First there was the need of the Spartan royal houses to defend their ancestors. Secondly, there was the need of the Spartan *polis* to legitimate communal values, primarily the Spartan military ethic. Finally there are Herodotus' own literary aims. For Herodotus, the Demaratus figure clearly is a convenient character for the dramatic presentation of Greek values through contrast to the Persian example. As many students of Herodotus have noticed, Demaratus fits the pattern of the 'wise adviser' which Herodotus uses throughout the *Histories* to give expression to Greek values.[56]

Included in this third episode of Spartan history is a brief mention of an important victory of Sparta over her perpetual enemy, Argos (*c.* 494). The devastating effect of this war on Argos is mentioned again in the context of the appeal of the Greek confederacy to Argos in 481 (7.148). In each case, the war is not mentioned for its own sake as an important event, nor is its significance for the balance of power in the Peloponnese discussed. Rather, Herodotus is concerned with the relationship of Cleomenes' acts of sacrilege against the Argives to his gruesome death, as well as the consequences of Argos' loss for its role in the Persian Wars. It is apparent that Herodotus and his sources have remembered and shaped the Cleomenes material for its moral implications, while Argos' devastating loss is also remembered as a partial explanation for the city's

[56] On the figure of the wise advisor, see Bischoff (1932) and Lattimore (1939). For an argument that the Demaratus episode is influenced not simply by Panhellenic Greek values but also specifically by Athenian democratic values, see Forsdyke (2001).

neutrality in the Persian Wars. Modern historians consider Sparta's victory over Argos to be of great importance in its own right. Sparta's victory consolidated her position of dominance in the Peloponnese and shows that, despite the claim of some of Herodotus' sources that Cleomenes was 'not quite right in his head' (5.42.1), Cleomenes was in fact a capable and strong king (Griffiths (1989)). Moreover, despite Herodotus' assertion that Cleomenes ruled for only a short time, his own narrative shows that Cleomenes was a driving force in Spartan policy from the 520s through the 490s. Herodotus, however, concentrates on the personal fate of Cleomenes, finishing off his 'biography' with the discovery of Cleomenes' bribery of the Delphic oracle, Cleomenes' flight first to Thessaly and then to Arcadia, and finally Cleomenes' recall to Sparta, madness and gruesome death (6.74–5). This selection of material must be partly due to the rival traditions of royal families, but also to popular and official *polis* traditions, as well as panhellenic traditions. These latter sources are indicated by Herodotus himself, as he attributes different explanations of Cleomenes' demise to 'most Greeks', 'the Athenians', and 'the Argives' (6.75).

Aegina's medism also provides an opportunity for a further instalment of the history of the conflict between Athens and Aegina (6.85–93). It is likely that these events were remembered in the *polis* traditions of Athens and Aegina partly as the 'ancient history' of their ongoing conflict in the later fifth century. The ultimate significance of these events for Herodotus' narrative, on the other hand, is mentioned in a later narrative: hostilities between Athens and Aegina in these years led the Athenians, on the advice of Themistocles, to use public funds to build a fleet which was ultimately used against Persia (7.144).

The decision to build a fleet (*c.* 482) is one of the few details of Athenian social and political history that Herodotus provides. Although Herodotus does mention the suspicions about the Alcmeonids after Marathon (6.121), the internal politics of Athens of the 490s and 480s do not fit his mandate of recording 'great deeds' and explaining the causes of the war with the Persians. Yet evidence from other sources suggests that these years were a particularly tumultuous period in the young democracy's history. From Thucydides' history we learn a few more details about Themistocles' career and policies, and from ostraka we get some names of leading political figures.[57] The *Athenaion*

[57] Thuc. 1.89–93, 134–8. For the ostraka, see Lang (1990) and Brenne (2000) and (2001).

Politeia's record of five ostracisms in the 480s (the first time the institution was used) and of a reform of the method for selecting archons pique historians' curiosity, yet only confirm how little we know of Athens' domestic history in this period.[58]

Plataean aid to Athens at Marathon provides the occasion for a brief account of how Plataea's alliance with Athens was the result of the intervention by the major Greek powers (Sparta, Corinth, and Athens) in the Boeotian League *c.* 519 (6.108). Herodotus does not explain the reasons for Cleomenes' presence in Central Greece at this time, although he does give a glimpse of internal tensions within the Boeotian League as well as the roles that the major powers played in settling disputes between states. It is clear from Thucydides' statement that the destruction of Plataea in 427 by the Spartans occurred in the 93rd year of the alliance between Athens and Plataea, that this alliance did indeed date back to the incidents that Herodotus describes (3.68.5). Finally, the appeal of the Greek confederacy to the tyrant Gelon leads to a digression on Sicilian history in these years (7.153). Herodotus' account covers the major incidents leading to Gelon's seizure of power first in Gela and then in Syracuse. Gelon's victory against the Carthaginians at Himera in 480 is also mentioned. We may surmise that Herodotus gathered the information for his account of Sicilian affairs from *polis* traditions of the Western Greek *poleis* while he lived in Thurii in Southern Italy.

Conclusion

The examination of Herodotus' treatment of Greek history shows how skilfully he collected, compared, and connected the oral traditions of families and communities to form a coherent account. Moreover, we have seen how the different types of traditions which constituted Herodotus' sources each shaped the past according to their specific fifth-century needs. These needs include the legitimation of contemporary social and political values and the defence of past conduct. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, we have seen

[58] *Ath. Pol.* 22. Herodotus does comment (6.109.2) that Callimachus, the polemarch at Marathon, had been chosen 'by the bean' (i.e., by lot), a statement which contradicts the testimony of the *Ath. Pol.* and has fuelled discussion of how archonship functioned in the 490s.

how Herodotus himself selects and organizes his material according to the aims of his history, his interests, and values. Central to Herodotus' aims are the demonstration of the causes of the rise and fall of individuals and communities and the use of the past to illustrate, the value of political freedom. The contemporary significance of the former aim with regard to the Athenian empire and later with regard to the Athenian democracy has often been noted.[59]

Herodotus' *Histories* record fifth-century Greeks' understanding of their past and thus give us access to their ways of seeing the world, and not solely to the views of an elite Greek intellectual. While these perceptions often do not reveal the past that they purport to recall, they do provide a window into the Greeks' self-understanding which is unique among the literature that we possess from this time.

[59] Fornara (1971a) 37–58 and 75–91; Raaflaub (1987), Stadter (1992) and Moles (1996).

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

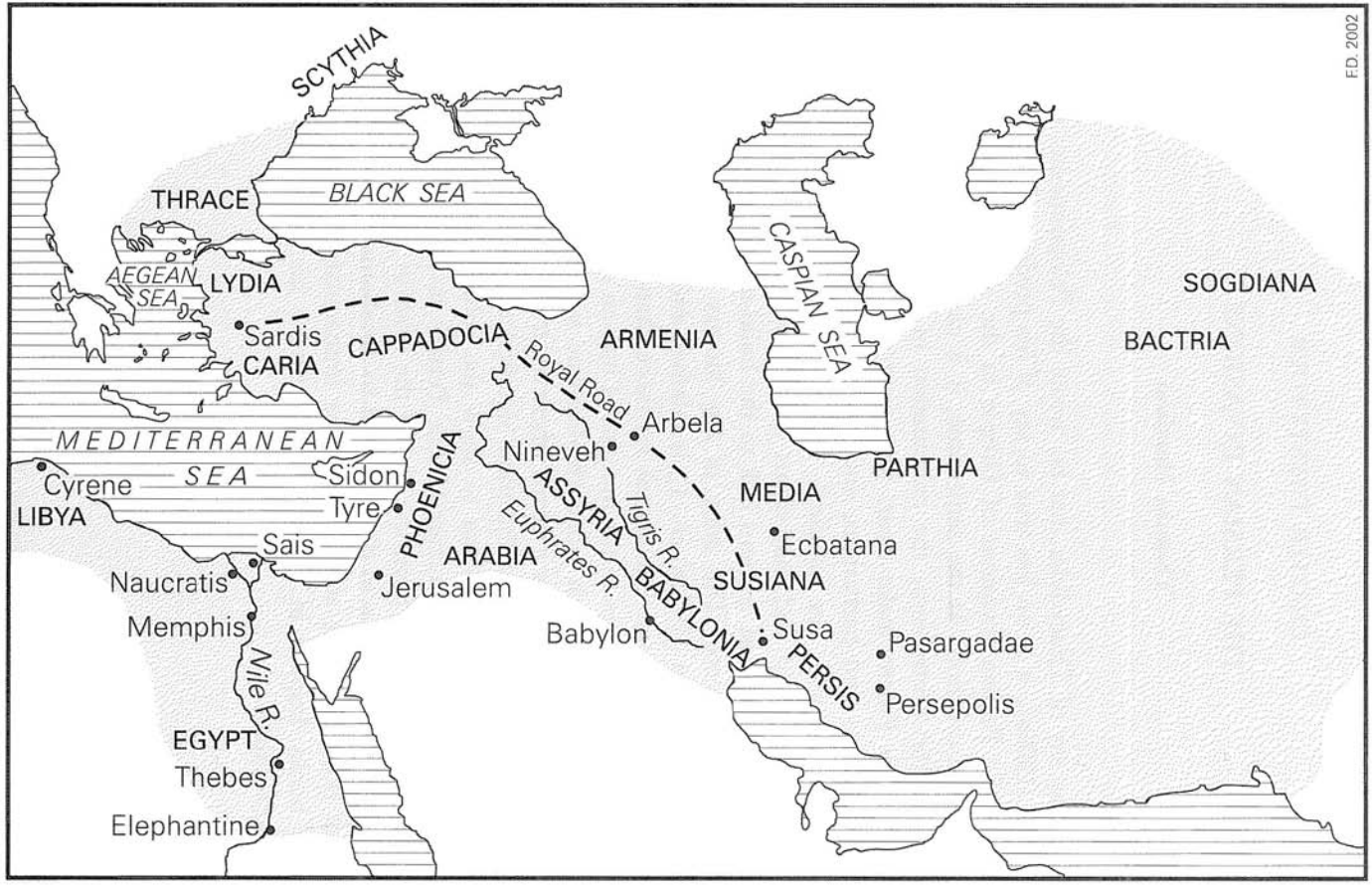
THE PERSIAN INVASIONS

Thomas Harrison

If we may say of Thucydides that he 'wrote the Peloponnesian war' (Loraux (1986a)), it is no less true to say of his predecessor that the unsuccessful Persian invasions of Greece in the early fifth century are his own creation. At the same time, it is clear that the Persian Wars are the centrepiece, the culmination of his *Histories*, as the words of his Proem make clear: 'the great and marvellous deeds, both of Greeks and barbarians, and especially through what cause they made war with one another'.

Clearly the 'great and marvellous deeds' are made up of much that has only the most tenuous link to the build-up to the Persians' expedition to Greece. The unity of any literary work, as Charles Fornara has written ((1971a) ch. 1), is relative, and the *Histories* present themselves, at least initially, as no more than a loosely unified structure, one that pushes to the margins of human experience, which in its course takes in such wonderful-but-true stories as that of the Pedasian priestess who grew a beard whenever trouble brewed (1.175, 8.104). Nevertheless, one of the most significant advances in scholarship on Herodotus has been to show the subtle ways in which Herodotus' narrative is structured.[1] The Persian invasion of Xerxes, though it is marked off from the rest of the *Histories* by the episode of the dreams that come to the king and to Artabanus at the beginning of Book Seven, is at the same time immaculately prepared in earlier books. Implicit in Herodotus' structure is his explanation of the war's causes.

[1] See e.g., the introduction of Dewald (1998).



The Persian Empire. Adapted from S. B. Pomeroy et al., *Ancient Greece: A Political, Social, and Cultural History* (Oxford 1999), 183 fig. 5.6.

The Persian Wars in the Histories

The beginning and end of Herodotus' work implicitly place the Persian Wars in a series of conflicts between Asia and Europe. The story of reciprocal wife-stealing with which Herodotus opens his *Histories* is one which—ingenuously or not—he ascribes to learned Persians (1.1–5). These Persians deemed that their enmity with the Greeks began with the foolish overreaction of the Greeks to the theft of Helen. 'For the Persians claim Asia and the barbarian peoples that inhabit it as their own and consider Europe and the people of Greece as distinct' (1.4.4). This view of the Persian Wars as rooted in a cycle of conflicts is confirmed by the end of the *Histories*.[2] The Persian claim to all Asia is repeated (9.116.3) in the course of the story of the Persian governor Artayctes and his sacrilege against the Greek hero Protesilaus (9.116–20). Through Protesilaus, the first Greek to die in the course of the Trojan war, and Xanthippus, the father of Pericles, the episode equates the now drastically chastened Persian empire both with the Greek campaign to Troy and to the Athenian expansionism of the fifth century.[3] There are similar overtones to the final chapter of the *Histories*.[4] At the critical juncture of the Persians' conquest of the luxurious Medes, Cyrus enjoins the Persians that it is better 'to live in a barren country and rule than to live in fertile plains and be the slaves of others' (9.122). Through the chapter's allusion to an earlier simplicity, and through the identity of Cyrus' interlocutor—Artembares, whose son Cyrus had chastized as a playground 'king' before his innate monarchy had been realized (1.114)[5]—Herodotus appeals back to the outset of the Persian empire at the moment of its eclipse by a younger power. Just as Sandanis had warned Croesus of the folly of making war on the Persians (1.71; cf. 1.126)—who wore leather trousers, drank water, and inhabited a barren country, but would quickly develop a taste for finer things—so Pausanias after Plataea demonstrated the absurdity

[2] See esp. Boedeker (1988), Dewald (1997). For the argument, however, that the opening of the *Histories* implies a firm distinction of myth and history (as espoused by e.g. Momigliano (1960) 14–15), see Nickau (1990), Harrison (2000b) 196–207, and Ch. 22, pp. 497–9, this volume.

[3] See, more generally, Fornara (1971a), Stadter (1992), Moles (1996).

[4] See esp. Redfield (1985) 114.

[5] For the significance in Greek of Cyrus' name, see Harrison (2000b) 262.

of the Persian desire for Greece by setting Persian and Spartan meals alongside one another (9.82).

Herodotus' Book One in large part tells the story of Croesus' replacement by Cyrus as the Greeks' barbarian bogeyman. The Lydian king Croesus, 'the first man we know to have begun unjust deeds against the Greeks', foolishly supposed that he could conquer the fledgling empire of Cyrus (1.46.1, 185.1), and so by his defeat brought the Persians and the Greeks face to face for the first time. Croesus had brought about the first subjugation of Ionia (1.92.1); now, through Cyrus, Ionia was enslaved for a second time (1.169.2). The rest of Book One sees the completion of the Persians' conquest of Asia. Cyrus, as his mother's dreams had foreboded, had been destined to rule all of Asia (1.108; cf. 1.209); through his defeat of Astyages, and the finishing touch of his conquest of Assyria (1.177–8.1), the dream was fulfilled. The rule of Asia is seen repeatedly as a single, distinct prize.[6]

From this point in the *Histories*, two main movements occur. The first is the Persians' continued expansion beyond their allotted territory. As Xerxes later noted in proposing the expedition against Greece, these earlier conquests formed a pattern:

> Men of Persia, I shall not be the first to introduce this custom among you, but shall adopt it, having received it from my forefathers. For as I learn from older men, we have never remained inactive since we wrested the sovereign power from the Medes, and Cyrus overthrew Astyages: but the deity leads the way, and to us who follow his guidance many things result to our advantage. What deeds Cyrus and Cambyses and my father Darius have achieved, and what nations they have added to our empire, no one need mention to you who know them well. (7.8α.1; cf. Verdin (1982))

Xerxes' secondary audience (of readers) may also appreciate other patterns, however. Though other more successful campaigns go relatively unheralded, Cyrus' expedition against the Massagetai (an expedition which ended in his death, 1.201–14), Cambyses' against the Ethiopians (3.25–6), or Darius' against the Scythians (4.83–144), are all expeditions too far, expeditions which exceeded the natural limits to the Persian empire (Lateiner (1989) ch. 6), and on which the question of the Persians' safe return to their heartland looms large.

[6] Cf. 3.88.1, 4.1, 4.4, 7.1.2.

The Scythian campaign presents an analogue to the later Persian invasion of Greece in a number of other ways:[7] the Scythians, for example, only unite against the Persian threat when it is proved to them that they are all the objects of Darius' revenge campaign (4.118–19).

The Persians' gradual expansion provides the narrative hook on which Herodotus hangs the descriptions of the customs or *nomoi* of foreign peoples which fill much of the early books of the *Histories*.[8] His description of the Persians' own customs follows their arrival as the masters of Asia (1.130). The Ionians' offer of submission to Cyrus leads to discussion of the history of the Ionians and Aeolians (1.142–51). The lengthy 'digression' on the history and customs of Egypt takes its start from the conquest of Egypt by Cambyses (2.1). This pattern of narrative framing ethnography is most clearly revealed by an exception: after his description of the peoples of Libya, Herodotus notes that most of these Libyan tribes had paid little attention to the king of the Medes (4.197.2). Herodotus also reinforces this impression of the Persians' accumulation of power by periodic reviews: the accession of Cambyses, and his decision to launch a campaign against Egypt, are the opportunity for his observation that Cyrus' son regarded the Ionians and Aeolians whom he took on this campaign as 'hereditary slaves' (2.1). The succession of Darius leads to a summary of all the peoples of the empire and of the tribute that they bring him (3.90–7). Like Herodotus' later reviews of the peoples at Xerxes' command in his expedition against Greece (7.61–99), such techniques all add to the impression of the relentless accumulation of power, so setting the scene, and piling up the stakes, for the narrative of invasion.[9]

The other main movement through the early books of the *Histories* is the gradual accumulation of the causes of war.[10] At the outset, it appears that we are in a world of discrete populations. The Phoenician ship that wends its way from the Red Sea through the Mediterranean to Argos, where the abduction or elopement of Io triggers a cycle

[7] See Hartog (1988) e.g., 51; from a different perspective Fol and Hammond (1988) 234.

[8] Contrast e.g., Murray's emphasis, (1988) 261–3, on two distinct 'elements' in the *Histories*: the 'collection of *logoi*' and the history of events; see also Ch. 14, p. 321, this volume.

[9] Harrison (2000a) ch. 8, (2000c); see also Ch. 14, pp. 328–361, this volume.

[10] Contrast Sealey (1957) 8, positing a break between two chains of grievances.

of war between Greeks and barbarians, is represented as being the first contact between these peoples (1.1). The possibility of populations remaining discrete is maintained in a number of later passages of the *Histories*, Nitocris' construction of isolationist barriers between herself and the 'great and restless empire of the Medes' (1.185–6), the advice of Bias or of Sandanis to Croesus not to think of attacking the Greek islands or the Persians (1.27, 71), or the proud message of the king of the Ethiopians to the spies of Cambyses (3.21.2–3):

> The king of the Ethiopians advises the king of the Persians, when the Persians can thus easily draw a bow of this size, then to make war on the Macrobian Ethiopians with more numerous forces, but until that time to let him thank the gods who have not inspired the sons of the Ethiopians with a desire to add another land to their own.

The Ethiopians are clearly unlike the Persians in having no desire to rule over others. Such passages seem also, however, to imply the futility of any attempt to hold back such expansionist powers. It might be better if peoples were able to remain apart in peace, but contact is inevitable—and, just as inevitably, contact leads to war.

That is also the implicit moral of a growing flood of individual contacts between Greeks and Persians, all of which have disproportionate consequences. The Persian governor Oroetes' personal grudge against Polycrates brought the Samian tyrant to his death, by harnessing his greed for wealth and luring him with the false promise of the means with which to realize his ambitions (3.120–5). The desperation of Democedes (see Griffiths (1987)), the Greek doctor discovered amongst the spoils of Oroetes and taken to the Persian court, to escape from the gilded cage of Susa and return to his home city of Croton leads to his being sent on a fact-finding mission to Greece (3.129–38), preparatory to later conquest:[11] 'these were the first Persians to come from Asia to Greece' (3.138.4), Herodotus observes. The chance meeting of Darius and the Samian Syloson leads by a circuitous route to the destruction of Samos, its being handed over to Syloson empty of its inhabitants (3.139–49). Similarly the eagerness for tyranny of the two Paeonians Pigres and Mastyes results (through the stunt, staged before Darius, of their hard-working sister) in the Paeonians' forced transportation to Asia (5.12–14).

[11] A Persian policy according to Martin (1952).

Most fateful of all, however, is the appeal to Aristagoras of Miletus by a group of Naxian exiles for support in their restoration (5.30–6). Aristagoras appeals in turn to his 'friend' Artaphernes. By dwelling on the wealth of Naxos, and portraying the island as a stepping stone to the Cyclades and Euboea, Aristagoras ensures that Artaphernes gives his help, but his quarrel with Artaphernes' appointed general Megabates means that the attempt on Naxos fails; this, coupled with the costs of the expedition, and a timely message from Histiaeus of Miletus—again, like Democedes, motivated by the desire to escape from Susa to his home (cf. 5.106–7)—encourage Aristagoras to initiate the Ionian revolt against Persia. The revolt is counter-productive: Aristagoras' own city of Miletus is razed to the ground; Ionia, Herodotus adds in reference to Book One, is enslaved for the third time (6.32)—only to be liberated with their second revolt at the close of the *Histories*, at the time of the battle of Mycale (9.104).

But the revolt has larger consequences—insofar as it embroils the Greeks of the mainland in the struggle with Persian authority. Just as he had tempted the Persians with the image of the wealth of Naxos and the Greek islands—and just as Histiaeus persuaded Darius to release him with the promise, predictably broken, that he would not change his clothes till he had made Sardinia tributary to the king (5.106.6, 6.2.1)—so Aristagoras hooks the Athenians with tales of the fabulous wealth of the peoples of Asia, and of their weakness to resist invasion (5.97; cf. 5.49). The twenty ships lent by the Athenians to the revolt were, in Herodotus' judgment, 'the beginning of evils for both Greeks and Barbarians' (5.97.3)—not necessarily a comment on the morality or good sense of the Athenians' action but simply an observation of the fateful instant at which the fuse for the Persian invasion of the Greek mainland was lit (5.105):[12]

> It is said that as soon as he discovered these things, taking no account of the Ionians, as he well knew that these would not go unpunished in their revolt, he asked: 'who are these Athenians?' and being told he called for his bow and, placing an arrow on it, he released it up into the sky, and as he shot it into the air said: 'O Zeus, grant me my revenge against the Athenians'. And after saying these things he instructed one of his servants, whenever dinner was laid before him, to say three times: 'O master, remember the Athenians!'

[12] Harrison (2000b) 242; contrast e.g., Momigliano (1960) 16.

Coupled with the encouragement of the Pisistratids and the pretext of the Athenians' refusal of earth and water, his daily reminder eventually provoked Darius to appoint Datis and Artaphernes with orders to enslave Athens and bring back those enslaved to Asia (6.94). Their subsequent defeat at Marathon made Darius, still incensed over the fate of Sardis, even more eager to subdue Greece (7.1.1), a double motive then inherited by his son Xerxes (7.8α.2–β, 138.1).

Herodotus' accumulation of causes might seem at first sight to be merely the absence of historical explanation and analysis:[13] rather than choosing between alternative causes for the wars, he simply amasses them in an untidy chain reaction of cause and effect. However, the care taken by Herodotus to keep different causes 'in play' suggests that this domino-pattern reflects a more considered view of causation, one which he has implemented systematically (contrast Momigliano (1960) 15). Herodotus' emphasis on the role of the individual may reflect a world-view (if not a world) in which the individual was more important (Forrest (1979)). The coming together of causes in the case of Aristagoras' decision to revolt may reflect a fatalistic conception of history: coincidences, or patterns of human action that seem to leave no choice to the individual, are frequently interpreted by Herodotus as evidence of the divine hand in events (Harrison (2000b) 234–40). The emphases on the first moment of contact between adversaries and on the accumulation of grievances are both, moreover, characteristics shared by the work of Herodotus' successor, Thucydides. His account of the Battle of Sybota, for example, highlights in slow-motion detail the instant at which the Athenians turn from the defensive to the offensive (Thuc. 1.49). With Thucydides even more than with Herodotus, modern critics have mistaken this focus on 'first contact' for the simplistic desire to allocate blame. If that had been either historian's aim, it is one that they could have achieved with much greater ease and clarity: rather, in both cases, their purpose is to bring out the full complexity of the war's causes.

The seriousness of Herodotus' strategy in the early books of his *Histories* is emphasized also by the way in which many of the themes

[13] See e.g., Murray's characterization of Herodotean causation, (1988) 463–4, as 'limited to two main areas, the explanation of events in terms of personalities, and belief in the inevitability of the rise and fall of states'; 'it is hard to find fault', he continues, 'with [Herodotus'] general view that the only adequate explanation for the Persian Wars must be a complete account of relations between the two peoples since the conquest of the Ionian cities in 545 BC'. Contrast Rood (1998) 213.

and techniques of those books recur in the 'debate' on the expedition at the beginning of Book Seven. Like Aristagoras and Histiaeus before him, Mardonius encouraged Xerxes with the promise of the fertility of Greece 'worthy to be possessed by the king of all mortals' (7.5.3)—for Mardonius had an ambition to be the governor of Greece (7.6.1). He was supported then by a host of coincidences: the invitation of the Thessalian Aleuadae, the pressure of the Peisistratid exiles of Athens and, in their entourage, the oracle-monger Onomacritus with carefully tailored prophecies from the collection of Musaeus (7.6.2). As we have seen, Xerxes is motivated also by the desire to maintain the 'custom' of continuing expansion established by his predecessors (7.8α.1); he would not be the son of Darius, the son of Hystaspes (and so on), if he did not exact vengeance on those who had torched Sardis (7.11.2). At the same time, Persian expansion is hardly morally discriminating. It would be a terrible thing, Mardonius professes, if the Sacae and the Indians were subdued when they had committed no injustice and the Greeks were not when they had (7.9α.1). Similarly, though the pretext of avenging Sardis is feebly maintained, Xerxes' real goal, it is repeatedly emphasized, is much greater: no less than to unite Asia and Europe, to create an empire 'bordering the aither of Zeus' (7.8γ).[14]

The causes of the expedition's ruin, however, are visible as soon as it is launched. The size and magnificence of the Persian force, the confidence of Xerxes in the Persians' good fortune, and the good sense of Artabanus in recognizing the jealousy of the divine all point to a reversal. The dreams that come to Xerxes and Artabanus are clearly intended to deceive.[15] Even if (as in the case of Croesus, 1.91) we may judge Xerxes somehow as 'responsible' for his failure to recognize such divine deception, Herodotus' narrative clearly emphasizes the inevitability of the action (Harrison (2000b) 231): Xerxes' and Artabanus' maudlin re-examination of their dreams (7.49), Herodotus' reference forward to the fate of Artayctes at the end of the *Histories* (7.33), or any of a series of glaringly misinterpreted dreams and omens[16]—all these point to a clear conclusion.

[14] Cf. 1.209.1, 6.48, 7.19.1, 32, 54.2, 138.1, 8.53.2, 109.3, Aeschylus *Persae* 189–99.
[15] Harrison (2000b) 136–7; contrast West (1987) 264–5.
[16] Cf. 7.19, 37.2, 57–58.1.

The invasion narrative

The onset of Xerxes' campaign brings with it a new direction and force in Herodotus' narrative. Digressions from the main thread of Persian progress—such as the catalogue of the peoples in Xerxes' army, their commanders and armour (7.61–99)—are generally much briefer than in the earlier books. Moreover, the number of cross-references introduced by Herodotus—sometimes double cross-references[17]—suggest again a considered and successful attempt to marshal his material effectively.

A number of consistent concerns run across Herodotus' narrative of the war. In its criteria of inclusion, however, Herodotus' 'account' of the war differs fundamentally from our assumed conception of a historical war narrative. The detailed narrative of Xerxes' itinerary through Europe digresses to include not only details of the towns and rivers passed by the Persians, but a whole range of curiosities: a town named merely 'Agora' (7.58.2), how lions devoured the Persian supply camels (7.125), the king's admiration at the Peneius gorge (7.128–30). Xerxes' own interest in what he passes offers the ostensible justification for many of Herodotus' excursuses: Herodotus' lengthy review of Xerxes' forces is prompted, for example, by that of the king himself; Xerxes' wonder at the Peneius gorge introduces Herodotus' geological theorizings; the king's guides similarly told him (as Herodotus tells us) of the myth of the punishment of Athamas, whose descendants' house the king then revered (7.197).

The emphasis in this final example on cults and aetiological myths tied to the localities passed by the Persians is also a consistent one, and one which may have a broader message: stories such as of how Thetis was stolen away at Cape Sepias (told to the Persians by the Ionians, 7.191), or of Aphetai where Heracles was 'left behind' by Jason and the Argonauts (7.193), reinforce a sense of the divine possession of the Greek landscape, of an undercurrent that pulls against the Persians in their attempt to appropriate Greece.[18] This sense is strengthened yet further on those occasions on which Xerxes and the Persians choose to propitiate Greek gods. Propitiation of Athena

[17] 7.184.3, 217.2, 8.50.1 (cf. 8.34–5), 82.2, 85.2.

[18] 7.58.2, 176.3, 189.3, 192.2, 198.2, 200.2. For the relationship of landscape and myth, see Buxton (1994) ch. 6. For the Persians' attempted appropriation of natural phenomena, cf. 1.189, 3.117, 4.91, 7.27.2, 35, with Harrison (2000b) 238–9.

Ilias and the heroes of Troy meets apparently with divine displeasure through a panic attack that comes over his men (7.43.2); the sacrifices ordered by Xerxes on the (ravaged) Athenian acropolis result in the sudden sprouting of the sacred olive tree, a symbol of Athenian revival (8.54–5); Cape Sepias, where the Persians propitiate Thetis and the Nereids, was perhaps not accidentally the site of the subsequent destruction of a large part of the Persian fleet.

This pattern of divine opposition to the Persians, and divine favour towards the Greeks, is another consistent strand of the Persian War narrative.[19] The storms that level the Greek and Persian fleets in advance of Artemisium (8.13; cf. 6.44), the succession of miracles that meet the Persians on their approach to Delphi (8.35–9), the apparition of the Eleusinian procession, forecasting the Persians' defeat at sea rather than on land (8.65), the sudden floodtide at Potidaea which swept away those Persians who had earlier committed sacrilege against Poseidon (8.129), the extraordinary distribution of Persian corpses around but not within the sanctuary of Demeter (9.65), or the multiple coincidences between the Battles of Plataea and Mycale (9.100), all these overlapping signs of divine favour in the war suggest what Themistocles makes explicit (8.109.3), that it was not the Greeks themselves who achieved their eventual victory in the war but the 'gods and heroes, who begrudged any one man to be king of both Asia and Europe, a man unholy and impious'.

This is not to say that Herodotus excludes from his account, or that he consequently downplays, the achievements or plans of men. As Themistocles also asserts (8.60γ), divinity is more likely to promote human plans if they are reasonable. Indeed, although Herodotus refrains, as we have seen in his account of the causes of the war, from any simplistic allocation of responsibility, the recording for posterity[20] of brave or ignoble deeds is an important priority for him. He is concerned always to count the dead in battle, to discover the bravest and the most cowardly fighters,[21] and to describe their memorials (7.225–6), to name traitors such as Ephialtes who led the Persians around the pass at Thermopylae (7.213–14),[22] or equally to record

[19] Contrast e.g., Murray (1988) 261 on the *Histories* as the 'first non-religious historical narrative'; against such formulations, see Harrison (2000b) ch. 1.

[20] Contrast Gould's emphasis on Herodotus' 'debt to the past' (1989) 119–20.

[21] 6.114, 7.223–32, 8.17, 85, 87–8, 93–5, 9.70–5.

[22] See also 6.101.2, 9.84, 85.3. Contrast, however, 1.51.4, 4.43 in which Herodotus

those who stood out against collaboration: the few brave Greeks, Antidorus of Lesbos or Panaetius of Tenos, who deserted from the Persian fleet to that of the Greeks (8.11.3, 82.1), or the rare islanders who refused Xerxes' demand for earth and water (8.46.4).

There is often, of course, a bravado quality to his claims of detailed knowledge: though there is no reason to doubt the accuracy of the names he does record, could he really (as he claims) have named the native guides of Xerxes (7.96.2), all three hundred of the Spartan dead of Thermopylae (7.224.1), or more (than the two Samians he does mention) of those in the Persian fleet at Salamis who captured Greek ships (8.85.2–3)? It is clear also that those classified with such seemingly objective clarity as the bravest or most excellent (*aristos*) of the Greeks correspond uncannily with those to whom extraordinary anecdotes had clung: Dieneces, who left 'as memorials' such witticisms as the remark that the Persians' cloud of arrows allowed the Greeks to fight in the shade, is cited as the bravest of the Spartans at Thermopylae (7.226); Amompharetus, whose actions at Plataea—at least, as described by Herodotus—might rather have brought him into disfavour, is credited nonetheless as one of the bravest Spartans at the battle (9.71.2); Sophanes of Decelea, said to have carried an iron anchor into battle (in actual fact an emblem on his shield) which he threw down where he stood firm to fight, is recorded as the bravest of the Athenians (9.74). Herodotus has apparently assumed that the scraps of oral tradition that have come down to him are representative of the full texture of a given battle. Of course, it might be countered that such tales would naturally adhere to those acknowledged as the bravest. Amompharetus is mentioned alongside other figures who are otherwise unknown—Poseidonius, Philocyon, and Callicrates—as well as Aristodemus, eager to make amends for his fortuitous survival at Thermopylae (9.71.2–72). As Herodotus' account of their burial testifies, however, what marked this group of 'unknowns' out was their particular status—either as Spartan *eirens* or as priests (9.85).[23] In the case of Callicrates, moreover, who died after being

is unwilling to blacken a man's reputation by naming him; at 3.125.3, his reluctance is to report the unfitting death of Polycrates.

[23] Depending on one's interpretation of the text and of e.g., the status of Spartan priests: for recent discussion, see now Hodkinson (2000) 258, Gilula (2002), Makres forthcoming. For a correlation also between Persian commanders and the brave, cf. 8.89.1, 9.71.1.

struck by an arrow before the battle had even begun, the only action that could justify his citation is his remark of regret at not taking part in the battle (9.72). His real qualification appears to have been his heroic looks:[24] as the Greek terms for bravery suggest, the line between acknowledged courage and aristocratic reputation was a grey one.

It is not only insofar as he seeks to commemorate the good and bad deeds of men that Herodotus relies on such anecdotal traditions. The witticisms of the Spartan Dieneces are characteristic of a brand of smart repartee that runs through Herodotus' account of the war. 'Themistocles', the Corinthian Adeimantus warns, 'those who in races jump the gun are whipped'; 'but those who are left behind', Themistocles retorts, 'win no prizes' (8.59; cf. 8.61, 125). Megacreon of Abdera similarly advised the Abderites, crippled by the costs of feeding Xerxes' forces, to give thanks to the gods that Xerxes demanded only one meal a day (7.120). The king's dinner is one of a number of subjects around which oral traditions appear to have clustered and which Herodotus then builds into his narrative (7.27–9, 32, 116, 118.3, 118–20);[25] it seems also to have provided food for Greek curiosity even into the fourth century. Other such repeated motifs include the enormous fortunes made by non-Persians from the scraps of Persian wealth,[26] the prominence at court of Persian women,[27] cunning messages such as that by which Demaratus warned the Spartans of the impending Persian invasion (7.239),[28] or the news of Persian successes and victories reaching Susa, or the tales of the ragged return of the Persian forces from Europe.[29]

To note Herodotus' stress on the anecdotal, however, is not to deny that he is equally concerned with 'nuts-and-bolts' military details. Herodotus provides, for example, sufficiently detailed information on the Persians' engineering projects—in particular on the bridge across the Hellespont (7.33–7)—to allow for their modern reconstruction

[24] For beauty as a heroic characteristic, see Visser (1982) 410, Harrison (2000b) 139, 162–3, 257.

[25] See Lewis (1987), Briant (1989), (1996) 297–306.

[26] 7.190, 4.43.7, 8.8.1, 9.80.3, Plutarch *Aristides* 5.7–8; cf. Miller (1997) 30–1; cf. also the alleged Lydian origins of Alcmeonid wealth, 6.125.

[27] Harrison (2000a) ch. 3; contrast Sancisi-Weerdenburg (1983), Brosius (1996).

[28] Cf. 1.123.4, 5.35.2, 8.128, with S. Lewis (1996) 145–6.

[29] Harrison (2000a) ch. 4. We cannot, of course, rule out the possibility of the truth of all such 'roving anecdotes'—the phrase is Hornblower's (1987) 22–3, used of false wealth at 3.123.2, Thuc. 6.46. See e.g., S. Lewis (1996) 189 n. 90.

(on paper, at least).[30] He also reveals a consistent interest in the numbers of Greek and Persian forces (6.115–17, 7.184–7, 8.1–2.1), taking trouble to ensure that his numbers add up, that round numbers remain round by the making up of losses (8.13, 62.2–3, 82.2, 9.32.2). Such consistency clearly may have been bought at the expense of a scrupulous concern with accuracy. Moreover, Herodotus' concern with such details may be dramatic as much as historical: the absurd weight of Persian numbers, as the discussions between Xerxes and Artabanus (or parallel dialogues in Aeschylus' *Persians*) reveal, play an important role in building up the scale of the Persians' expedition and of their impending failure.[31] Stories of the huge demand placed on cities by the Persian forces, of rivers drunk dry, or the king's observation that Greek grain ships at Abydos were bringing him supplies (7.147.2–3),[32] may suggest an awareness of the need for supplies and logistical planning. But it is not a concern that is sustained or which—except for the important theme of the rejection of the Persians by Greek 'land and sea', a corollary to the gods' opposition (Harrison (2000a) ch. 7)—is offered as any form of explanation for Persian defeat.

Herodotus' accounts of battles are necessarily stylized. The line between battle narrative and post-mortem is a grey one. Which city or people holds which wing (6.111.1, 8.85.1, 9.26–30, 46–7)? Which city began the battle (8.84)? Who fought bravely? Did the Corinthians, for example, flee from Salamis as the Athenians claimed but they denied (8.94, cf. 9.105)? The reason for this focus, of course, is the partisan nature of Herodotus' sources.[33] Herodotus also ascribes a limited range of tactical choices to any commander: the decision to fight a battle in a confined space (a 'tactic' employed with success

[30] See esp. Hammond (1988b) 527–32, Hammond and Roseman (1996). Herodotus' explanation of Xerxes' motivation for ordering another engineering project, the Athos canal—that he wanted to display his power and leave a memorial of himself (7.24)—may also not be far off the mark: cf. Kent (1953) DSf.

[31] The numbers of troops and ships can be brought to reasonable levels by, e.g., estimates of the number of men that a given territory might support, standard sizes of Persian navies, and the drastic but perhaps justifiable expedient of removing noughts from many of Herodotus' figures: see e.g., Lazenby (1993) 90–6, Hammond (1988b) 532–5, 549, Young (1980).

[32] See Hammond's comments on 7.121.3; (1988b) 537. Cf. 7.112, 158, 187.

[33] Cf. Herodotus' judgement on the impossibility of assessing who fought bravely at the Battle of Lade, 6.14.1. See also e.g., de Jong (1999) 262–71, for a detailed literary analysis of the battle of Salamis, and Ch. 23, pp. 528–31, this volume.

by the Greeks at Artemisium, Thermopylae, and at Salamis, 7.175–7, 8.16, 60α–β) or in a location suitable for cavalry (6.102; cf. 5.63.4). Though the moving of men along the Greek lines at Plataea (9.46–7) or the refusal of Amompharetus to retreat from his forward position (9.53) may reflect a degree of planning inaccessible to Herodotus—Amompharetus, it has been suggested, was left in advance of the line intentionally to cover their tactical retreat[34]—Herodotus maintains that the rearrangements of the battle lines were prompted merely by the Spartans' sense of their own inexperience of the Persians, and that Amompharetus was motivated simply by Spartan obduracy. Though scraps of more detailed information are preserved (Darius' garrison against the Scythians, for example, 7.59.1), and though there is evidence of relative tactical expertise (in references to the inability of Megarians to cope with cavalry, 9.21, or the Athenians' superior knowledge of siege warfare, 9.70.2), the extent to which Herodotus' account may provide the basis for modern rationalizations is often questionable.

When we move on to inquire into the causes of the Persians' defeat, strictly military explanations are again few and far between. The Persians, we are told, died in such numbers at Salamis because of their being unable to swim (8.89). A small rash of such minimalist explanations appear in the much more complex narrative of the battle of Plataea: the Persians' forces were insufficiently well armoured (9.63.2); when the elite Persians fled, the rest of the Persian line disintegrated (9.68). In general, however, if we were to judge the importance of any explanation by the space given to it in the pages of the *Histories*, it would be hard to avoid another conclusion: that the Greeks' victory was the result simply of their superiority over their enemies (whether that superiority be the result of nature or nurture).[35] That, at least, is the implicit moral of a series of dialogues between Persians and Greeks: the lecture on freedom given by the Spartan heralds to the Persian Hydarnes (7.133–6),[36] the report that the Greeks were competing in games at Olympia—leading the Persian Tritantaechmes to observe that they were fighting against men who

[34] Lazenby (1993) 239–40; Barron, (1988) 607, suggests an Athenian source.

[35] See the comparison of Herodotus and Hippocrates of Jouanna (1981).

[36] The encounter with Xerxes has a sting in its tail, 7.136: the king delivers a lecture on the 'universal customs of men' contravened by the Spartans in killing a herald.

competed for virtue rather than wealth (8.26)—or Demaratus' homily on Greek poverty and virtue and the constraining influence of *nomos* (7.101–4). These dialogues stress repeatedly the link between the Greeks' freedom and their military valour. Xerxes, for example, is unable to comprehend the composed fashion in which the Spartans at Thermopylae prepared for their own death (7.209.1); only in the light of the battle is he able to acknowledge that he has at his command 'many people but few men' (7.210.2; cf. 8.88.3).

In many ways, however, this stark contrast is subverted. The Persian fleet at Salamis fights much more courageously than at Artemisium for fear of the king (sitting on high recording their actions, 8.86). The Persians at Plataea fought no less bravely than the Greeks, but they were let down by their lack of skill and discipline and by their armour (9.62.3). There are frequent glimpses also of a strong ethos of loyalty among the king's lieutenants—and of a tradition of the king's reward for such loyalty[37]—and of a heroic ideal of excellence among the Persians: Xerxes, Herodotus notes surprisingly, was deserving of his rule over so many men because of his beauty and height (7.187.2).[38]

The Greeks, on the other hand, were not uniformly united by high ideals. The Phocians, Herodotus observes, only fought for the Greeks because of their hostility to the Thessalians (8.30); if the Thessalians had not medized, he speculates, the Phocians would themselves have done so. The certainty and Panhellenic zeal with which the Athenians dismiss all thought of an alliance with the Persians (8.143–4) is immediately undermined by Herodotus' account of the Athenians' actions. The impression of the Athenians' visceral opposition to the idea of an alliance is reinforced by the story of the spontaneous stoning of Lycidas and his family for the suggestion that the Persian offer should be put to the people (9.5), yet it is only by using the threat of such an alliance that the Athenians succeed in galvanizing the Spartans into action (9.6–9). Herodotus shows some puzzlement at the contradictory nature of his material (9.8.2): why were the Spartans so nonchalant now when they had earlier shown such anxiety at the prospect of an Athenian alliance with Persia? Perhaps, now that the Isthmus wall was more advanced, they

[37] 3.160, 4.143, 6.30, 7.8.δ, 27–9, 38–9, 106–7, 117 with Harrison (2000b) ch. 8.
[38] 1.139, 4.91.2, 7.187.2, 9.25.1, 96.2 with Briant (1996) 237–9.

did not consider the threat so great? At any rate, it was only by virtue of a stiff reminder of the joint power of Athens and Persia and of the inadequacy of the Isthmus wall from the Tegean Chileos (9.9) that the Athenians avoided making their threat a reality.

Already in the warm afterglow of victory at Plataea, moreover, the seeds of the Greeks' own excesses are evident. Even in the midst of Herodotus' catalogue of the brave, there are a number of passing references to later Greek deaths at each other's hands (9.73.3, 75, 76; Fornara (1981)). Though Pausanias refrains from stooping to the Persian level by mutilating the corpse of Mardonius (9.78), the recommendation that he should do so, from the prominent Aeginetan Lampon, is significant. Pausanias' chivalrous treatment of a Coan lady prisoner (9.76), or his ostentatiously Spartan taste in food (9.82), hint at his later degeneration into tyrannical excess: his adoption of Persian dress and a 'Persian table' (Thuc. 1.130.1; Fornara (1971a) 62 ff.). Similarly the barbaric punishment of Artayctes meted out by the Athenian Xanthippus at the end of the *Histories* points forward to the excesses of the Athenian imperialism of his son, Pericles.[39]

Moreover, though the Greeks engineer a seemingly resolute unity in the face of battle (8.86), this unity is, in the broader canvas of the war and the *Histories*, at best tenuous. The theme of the tension between the two leading cities of Greece, Athens and Sparta, is one that runs throughout the *Histories*. It is reflected, for example, in the very organization of the work, with the early histories of Athens and Sparta introduced in pairs (through the device of the search for alliances of first Croesus and then Aristagoras, 1.56–68, 5.38.2–97). War exposes this tension. As Miltiades observes before Marathon, the battle against the Persians is also a battle for Greece: if Athens wins through, she will become the first of the cities of Greece (6.109.3). The battle of Mycale sees Athenians and Spartans actually scrambling to gain the greatest share of the credit for the liberation of Ionia (9.102.2).

The differences of interest between the Greek states are also, of course, reflected in the proposed strategies for repelling the Persians. The Spartans and Peloponnesians had no desire to fight for the Greeks who lived north of the Isthmus (8.49, 70.2, 74). Just as Themistocles devised a cunning ploy whereby to break off the Greeks

[39] See above, nn. 2–3.

of Asia Minor from the Persian fleet (or to undermine Xerxes' confidence in his Greek troops, 8.19, 22), he also ensured that the Greek alliance held together by threatening the allies that the Athenians would desert to found a colony at Siris in Italy (8.62.2), a threat that is said to have been vital in persuading the allies to stay put at Salamis (8.63). When Peloponnesian discontent broke out into the open (8.74), Themistocles resorted to still more devious means, sending Sicinnus to the Persian camp to report that the Greeks were at loggerheads, with many inclining to the King, and that they were planning to break out in flight from Salamis (8.75.2–3). While misrepresenting the real cause of division, Themistocles uses the Greeks' disunity to impose his own view upon them. The fleeting unity of Salamis is in some senses then actually the product of the Greeks' political *disunity*.

When this sequence of events is put together with Herodotus' 'unpopular verdict' of the pivotal contribution of the Athenians to Greek victory—his forecast that the Spartans would have been betrayed by their allies, and either died noble deaths or come to some settlement with the Persians (7.139.3–4)—it is clear that he attaches an enormous weight to the acts of trickery by which Themistocles engineered battle at Salamis, and to his advice to build a fleet from the windfall at Laurion (7.144). Nonetheless, Greek victory is not solely due to the Athenians. The Persians consistently fail to take advantage of Greek disunity, or to drive wedges in the Greek camp. Demaratus' advice to occupy Cythera and so to provoke a civil war in the Peloponnese in order to isolate the Spartans (7.235) is rejected by the king in favour of Achaemenes' to keep the Persian forces together (7.236–7).[40] Artemisia similarly recommends that any battle at Salamis should be avoided (8.68): instead the fleet should proceed in parallel with the army to the Peloponnese, with the result that the king's enemies would scatter; the Peloponnesians, she adds (echoing Herodotus' consistent report of Peloponnesian misgivings, 8.49, 70.2, 74), would have no stomach to fight on behalf of Athens.

[40] It is possible that it is through this advice that Demaratus' earlier response to Leutychidas (that his taunt would be the 'beginning either of great evil or great good fortune for the Lacedaemonians', 6.67.3) is fulfilled. If his advice had been taken, it would have been a great misfortune for the Spartans. Demaratus' other potentially significant intervention was his role in the succession of Xerxes (7.2–3), but Herodotus ascribes the main role there to the king's mother, Atossa (7.3.4).

Even after Salamis, Herodotus presents the Persians with one last chance to break up their enemies: the Thebans offer Mardonius a strategy whereby they might 'subdue the whole of Greece without a fight' (9.2):

> 'While the Greeks continue to be firmly of one mind . . . it would be difficult for all mankind to overcome them. But if you do what we advise', they continued, 'you will without difficulty frustrate their plans: send money to the most powerful men in the cities, and by sending it you will divide Greece into factions; then, with the support of those in your faction, you will easily subdue those who are not of your mind.'

Whereas Themistocles, however, uses fair means and foul to attain his ends—taking money from the Euboeans, and passing a part of it on to Eurybiades to encourage him not to retreat to the Isthmus (8.4–5)—Mardonius refrains from bribery, overcome by the desire to sack Athens for a second time and to report the news to his king (9.3.1).

In all these instances, the consequences of the rejected strategies would have been exactly those postulated by Herodotus as the result if the Athenians had not stood firm at Salamis (7.139.3–4). The only occasion on which the Persians do intervene to take advantage of Greek disunity, however, is at Salamis. This persistent stress on the potential for the Persians to take advantage of Greek divisions is perhaps the key interpretative theme of the Persian War narrative. The Persians' repeated failure to grasp their opportunities itself demands explanation, however.

Essentially the Persians are trapped within their national stereotype.[41] A corollary of the Persians' time-hallowed monarchy (3.82.5) is an almost complete lack of effective counsel. So, for example, Xerxes summons his elders at the beginning of Book Seven 'so as to learn their opinions and inform them all of his wishes' or (in his own words) 'so that I may not seem to follow my own counsel' (7.8, 7.8δ.2); the king is furious at the opposition of Artabanus (7.10–11).[42] Artemisia's frank advice after Salamis—that Xerxes should leave the conduct of the campaign to Mardonius—is accepted for the reason

[41] For Herodotus' assumption of consistent national characteristics, revealed e.g., at 7.238, see Harrison (2000b) 237–8, 240–1.

[42] Contrast Xerxes' pacific response to Artemisia, 8.69. Other examples of the failure of consultation: 7.101–4, 209, 234–7, 8.67–9. See further Harrison (2000a) ch. 8.

that it coincides with the king's preference (8.103). As a consequence of this 'democratic deficit', there are simply no brakes on continued Persian expansion. Despite their delight and relief at the momentary cancellation of the expedition (7.13.3), Xerxes was surrounded by those who encouraged him, telling him what he wanted to hear (7.13.2, 16α.1). After the defeat at Salamis, Mardonius committed himself to the command of the campaign for fear that he would otherwise be held responsible for defeat (8.99–100); at the same time he tried to shift the blame for defeat onto the Phoenicians and other non-Persian forces. His desire to sack Athens for a second time, and to send the report of this achievement to Xerxes in Sardis, destroys any chance, however slight, of his forging an alliance with the Athenians, and so of victory (9.3). When frank counsel is available, moreover, the advice is predictably ignored (e.g., 8.68; cf. 8.102.3).

Two other Persian characteristics compound their defeat. Their reliance on numbers—a *nomos* of the Persians, according to Herodotus (1.136.1), but also apparently a pathological obsession of Xerxes—is repeatedly and devastatingly counter-productive (Harrison (2000a) ch. 7). The land and the sea, as Artabanus warns Xerxes, will be all the more hostile for the number of his ships (7.49.1)—a prophecy duly fulfilled by the series of storms that batter the Persian fleet. At Thermopylae, Artemisium and at Salamis, the number of Persian men simply enhances the advantage to the Greeks of fighting in a confined space and contributes to the number of Persian casualties (7.177, 211.3, 8.16, 60α–β).

The second Persian characteristic to contribute to their defeat is their failure to heed the lessons derived from the gods. It was, Herodotus tells us, in accordance with a Persian *nomos* that Mardonius chose to initiate the battle of Plataea in contradiction of the omens that he had received (9.41.4). This can be contrasted with the proper (and apparently well-received) ritual observations of the Greeks. The Greeks' progress towards Plataea, by contrast to the Persians' earlier arrival, seems at times like a procession from shrine to shrine (9.19). In the battle itself, the Greeks' obedience to the omens—favourable for defence, but unfavourable for attack—eventually saw them rewarded (9.61.3–62.1):

> The Spartans being hard-pressed and the victims being unfavourable, Pausanias, looking towards the Heraion of the Plataeans, called upon the goddess, requesting that they might not be disappointed of their hopes. While he was calling upon her, the Tegeans, starting forward,

attacked the barbarians, and immediately after the prayer of Pausanias the victims became favourable to the Lacedaemonians as they sacrificed.

This episode forms part of a larger contrast.[43] Whereas the Greeks make a priority of consulting the oracle at Delphi,[44] Xerxes sees Delphi only as a source of plunder (8.35–9). It is only Mardonius who gives any place to oracles in his planning by sending Mys of Europus on a tour of oracular shrines (8.133–5). It is on the basis of the oracles obtained by Mys that Mardonius attempts to forge an alliance with the Athenians (8.136, 140–4). The advice of the oracles tallies closely with Herodotus' persistent stress on the Persian need to drive a wedge in the Greek alliance. Yet again Greek division and defeat were averted by a whisker.

Veracity and bias

We turn finally to issues of veracity. The first difficulty that we must admit is the lack of any other sustained accounts by which to assess Herodotus' account of the war. The epitomized narrative of the fourth-century Ctesias, though it may contain echoes of later Persian elaborations on the Persian Wars,[45] is notorious for its failings, most dramatically for its reversal of Salamis and Plataea. Plutarch may give plausible supplementary details—his reference to Themistocles' involvement in the quarrel of Corcyra with Corinth, for example (*Themistocles* 24; cf. 32), may offer a context for the Corcyraeans' offer of ships to the Greek fleet (7.168.3)—but his work is also replete with second-generation (or still later) embellishment: it is at the very least open to question, for instance, whether we may give credence to the sophisticated strategy ascribed to Themistocles at Salamis, his learning the lesson of Artemisium and taking advantage of a dawn swell to disrupt the Persian line (*Themistocles* 14.2).[46]

Aeschylus' *Persae* has often been discussed on the assumption that the playwright, writing only seven years after the events at Salamis, felt honour-bound to provide an accurate historical record; alternatively, historians have fallen back on the argument that Aeschylus

[43] For a similar contrast in Aeschylus' *Persae*, see Harrison (2000a) ch. 9.
[44] Contrast, however, the Euboeans' failure to heed the prophecy of Bacis, 8.20.
[45] See Lenfant (1996); cf. Bigwood (1978).
[46] As Hammond (1988b) 575–6, 578; cf. Lazenby (1993) 186.

could not have diverged from the true course of events without provoking the outrage of his audience of fellow-veterans. The first of these lines is unfounded, however, and the second—that of the historical constraint represented by his audience—arguably offers little comfort.[47] Aeschylus 'account' of Salamis is short on detailed information—the tendentious detail that the Athenian ships were the first to break into Persian view is a rare exception (399–401). As a result of this, Aeschylus can offer little historical control: the suggestion, for example, that the Herodotean version of a hoplite skirmish on the island of Psyttaleia is the fabrication of an anti-Themistoclean tradition (see e.g., Fornara (1966)) is not one which Aeschylus can help us to quash. Other constraints, moreover—the need to generate a recognizably *stereotyped* representation of the Persians, or to develop the play's political and ideological arguments—would surely have outweighed any, even residual, historical duty. The emphasis, for example, laid by Aeschylus (and Herodotus) on the orderliness of the Greek fleet, by contrast to the chaotic jumble of the Persian navy (*Persae* 399–400; cf. 8.86), can be explained simply in terms of the play's theme of individual Greek submission to the collective;[48] to take such a detail at face value may be to be deceived by the Athenians' own recreation of their past (contrast Lazenby (1993) 190–1).

Where the *Persae* is arguably most useful is in its ideology rather than its narrative of events. By providing close parallels to the ideology implicit in Herodotus' narrative—in its representation of the prominence of Persian women, for example, or of the Greeks as plucky underdogs—the play helps us to reconstruct the impetus that lay behind the distortion of the history of events (Harrison (2000a) ch. 3). Persian expressions of interest in things Greek—seen, for example, in the questions 'who are the Athenians?' or 'who are the Spartans?' (5.105, 1.153; cf. Aesch. *Persae* 230–45), or in more extended fashion in the interviews of Xerxes and Demaratus—are revealed to be a regular motif of Greek traditions on Persia and a convenient vehicle for highlighting, through 'a kind of "oratio obliqua"',[49] Greek virtues rather than knowledge of the Persian court.

[47] See further Harrison (2000a) ch. 1; Pelling (1997a); and Ch. 6, pp. 137–45, this volume.

[48] See esp. Goldhill (1988), Harrison (2000a) chs. 8–9.

[49] Craig (1924) 99; see further Harrison (2000a) chs. 3–4.

Other pieces of evidence come with their own difficulties. The controversial 'Themistocles decree' may shed important light on the Athenian evacuation, suggesting a more planned withdrawal—if it indeed derives from an authentic decree.[50] The near-contemporary mural of the Stoa Poikile might have provided an alternative impression of Marathon, if it had survived through more than ancient testimonies.[51] The Greek landscape has been the subject of continuing battles on the topography of each of the battles of the war: the effort to decide, for example, whether ancient Psyttaleia was modern Ayios Yeoryios or Lipsokoutali (a question with huge implications for the shape of the Battle of Salamis) is one made more difficult both by the disappearance of ancient place names, and by changes in the landscape itself.[52]

On this and other questions then we can expect no historiographical shortcuts on the basis of other sources of evidence. In attempting to interpret Herodotus' account, moreover, we must negotiate not only suspicions of a cynical bias—allegations, for example, that Herodotus wrote his work as a paean of praise to Athens or as an apology for Delphi—but also a whole range of more subtle forms of 'deformation' (Murray (1987) 102).

Accusations of a cynical bias—from antiquity to the present day[53]—have invariably been exaggerated. The imperative of presenting the war as a struggle between free men and slaves may lead Herodotus, for example, to downplay the presence of slaves in the Greek forces, but he also provides much of the evidence to counter this rewriting of history.[54] The common view of a Herodotean bias in favour of the Athenian Alcmeonid clan is also unfounded.[55] The loyal family retainer might dismiss what he considers a libel against his patrons—as Herodotus dismisses the story of Alcmeonid treachery at Marathon (6.115, 121–31)—but he would not be thanked for repeating at length the substance of that libel.[56] The compliment paid by Herodotus to

[50] See Hammond (1988b) 558–63; cf. Lazenby (1993) 102–4.

[51] See e.g., Hammond (1968) 26–31, Harrison (1972), Francis and Vickers (1985).

[52] See esp. Hammond, Pritchett, and Burn as cited by Hammond (1988b), Lazenby (1993).

[53] See esp. Plutarch, *de malignitate Herodoti*, *Moralia* 854–74.

[54] Hammond (1988b) 549, 563 n. 79, Hunt (1998) chs. 2–3.

[55] For Alcmeonid traditions, see esp. Thomas (1989) ch. 5; also Chs. 2, pp. 37–42, and 22, p. 504, this volume.

[56] See n. 22 above for Herodotus' unwillingness to blacken reputations.

Aristides, 'the most excellent and just of the Athenians' (8.79.1), is never paralleled by any tribute to an Alcmeonid. The fact that Aristides' reputation for justice was proverbial, moreover, may suggest that Herodotus had no privileged access to Athenian family tradition (Fehling (1989) 243–5). The charge that his account of the war covers over the medism of the Delphic oracle is one which fails completely to consider the mechanisms by which belief in oracles was maintained. Herodotus can hardly have been alone in highlighting the 'eternal gratitude' (7.178) earned by the god rather than his judicious caution.[57] Herodotus' statement of the pivotal role of Athens is accompanied by an acknowledgment of the unpopularity of such a verdict (7.139.1): this is not the manner of an unthinking apologist; indeed Herodotus seems implicitly to accept the validity of others' resentment of Athens. Herodotus may give space to the Athenians' stirring rejection of an alliance with the Mede (7.144), but he then, as we have seen, suggests that this situation would have become inevitable—had the Athenians not succeeded in stiffening Spartan resolve by indicating that such an alliance was a possibility (cf. Barron (1988) 596).

If Herodotus is guilty of an Athenian bias, it is in his acceptance of Athenian claims at face value: in his report, for example, of the Athenians' noble suppression of their desire for a share in the command (8.3). The material from which Herodotus drew is frequently, as we have seen, anecdotal and partisan. He is often, of course, capable of rejecting material on precisely these grounds: the story that the Corinthians fled from Salamis he dismisses as an Athenian slander (8.94). On other occasions, however, partisanship slips through the net. Many of the traditions surrounding Themistocles, most notably his alleged medism, may be the products of his later history: his expulsion from Athens and eventual flight to Persia. At the same time, however, the tradition that his political enemy Aristides appealed to him before Salamis to compete for the good of the city (8.79.2–3) originates in a patriotic, democratic tradition that predates his retrospective demonization: Aeschylus' *Persae* significantly portrays their achievements at Salamis as balancing one another.[58]

Herodotus' claim that Athens' contribution to the war was crucial is clearly a considered judgment (7.139); the same conclusion,

[57] See esp. Parker (1985), Elayi (1978), (1979), Harrison (2000b) ch. 5.
[58] See further Harrison (2000a) chs. 2, 9.

however, is implicit in a number of other episodes: in Themistocles' insistence that the freedom of Greece depends upon the decision to remain at Salamis (8.62.1), or Mardonius' realization of the need to come to terms with the Athenians (8.136.2–3). Clearly it is possible that Herodotus, in Thucydidean fashion,[59] has knowingly planted this implication in confirmation of his earlier judgment; but it is also possible that such an implication was, in part at least, embedded in such *logoi* as they came to him, and that Herodotus' verdict at 7.139 derived in part *from* such stories. This phenomenon of embedded bias can be more clearly shown by an example that contradicts his judgment of Athens' role, when Demaratus makes a similar claim on behalf of the Spartans (7.209.4): 'Understand this. If you conquer these men and those that wait in Sparta, no other people of men remain, king, who will raise their hands to you.' The battle over whose contribution to the war was most vital—one which originated immediately in the aftermath of the war—has spilled over, it seems, onto the pages of the *Histories*.[60] We can well understand, against this backdrop, why Herodotus showed some anxiety in delivering his verdict.

The deformation of Herodotus' sources need not, however, in all cases be motivated by partisanship. It is dictated also by a desire for order: the desire that creates semi-mythical analogues for Xerxes' invasion of Greece in earlier Persian expeditions, which sees national character or *nomoi* rigidly repeated, or the fatalism which looks for the signs of the end of the expedition at its outset. It is perhaps the same drive for order which motivates Herodotus to ensure that numbers remain round, or which (on the part of his sources) has spirited the precise synchronisms of Artemisium and Thermopylae (8.15), Plataea and Mycale (9.100.2), or Himera with Salamis or Thermopylae (7.166, Diod. Sic. 11.24.1).[61]

[59] E.g., Thucydides' emphasis on the growth of Athenian power and Spartan fear in the course of his narrative of the Pentakontaetia. For a defence of the Pentakontaetia, see Rood (1998) ch. 10.

[60] See further West (1970), Harrison (2000a) ch. 6; contrast Murray (1988) 471–2, emphasizing the coalescence of different versions of the co-operative Persian wars by comparison with the Ionian Revolt; for the Panhellenic tone of Simonides' Plataea elegy, and for its relationship with the *Histories*, see e.g., Boedeker (1995), (1996), Rutherford (1996) 175 (though contrast Aloni (1994)). For further discussion of Herodotus' attitude towards Athens, see Ch. 2, this volume.

[61] See further Gauthier (1966), Rood (1999), Harrison (2000c).

We must also contend with the falling away of many of the details that we would consider most valuable. The mystery of the non-appearance of the Persian cavalry at Marathon can only be answered by guess-work (e.g., Lazenby (1993) 59–61). In other cases, Herodotus' account may disguise more prosaic alternatives. Xerxes' construction of a mole at Salamis is seen by Herodotus only as a bluff to conceal his planned retreat: modern historians suggest plausibly that the mole may have been designed for a more positive role, that its construction may in part have predated Salamis, and that the King's decision to retreat was made in a more reasoned and calm fashion.[62] Similarly various attempts have been made to find a sober, strategic reason for Leonidas' self-sacrifice at Thermopylae.[63] Reconstruction, however, can quickly become fanciful. In a useful recent corrective, it has been suggested that the absence of detailed strategic considerations in Herodotus' narrative may only reflect the lack of detailed strategy on the part of the war's commanders (Lazenby (1993) e.g., 14, 38–9, 79).

The reconstruction of Persian history presents especial difficulties. Though Demaratus' interviews with Xerxes on the virtues of the Spartans may simply be the product of Greek imagination, and though what may have been no more than a 'modest superiority' in Persian numbers has been monstrously inflated (Young (1980) 237), there is clearly plenty of material in the Histories that originates in near-eastern tradition. The stories of Xerxes' army marching through the dissected corpse of the son of Pythius (7.39.3) or of the punishment of the Hellespont (7.35) both represent in distorted fashion near-eastern rituals.[64] Many of the names of individual commanders find corroboration in the clay tablets of Persepolis (Lewis (1985)); Herodotus' catalogue of the many different contingents in the Persian army is also likely to originate in Persian material (Armayor (1978a)).

The constraints on the elaboration of such material clearly are less than in the case of Herodotus' Greek sources. In some instances,

[62] Hammond (1988b), Lazenby (1993) 163–5, 198.

[63] Grant (1961), Lazenby (1993) 144–7. Similarly, Eurybiades' failure to remove to the Isthmus at 8.4 is ascribed to Themistocles' bribery, when simple strategic considerations—the desire not to leave Leonidas at Thermopylae stranded—may have explained it more adequately: Hammond (1988b) 552.

[64] Masson (1950), West (1987) 265–6, Perdrizet (1912); cf. Keaveney (1996).

a kernel of fact appears to have been wilfully misunderstood. The Persian custom of offering *proskynesis* to their king is falsely represented as constituting a form of worship (e.g., 7.136.1)—this despite Herodotus' report that the Persians offered *proskynesis* also to men of higher status whom they met on the streets (1.134.1).[65] Similarly, the history of Persian respect for the gods of foreign peoples is either erased (see e.g., Kuhrt and Sherwin-White (1987)) or, as in the case of the Persian invasion of Greece, presented in such a fashion that rare instances of piety seem inexplicable (Harrison (2000b) 218). The story, at the end of Book Nine, of the descent of the Persian court into lust and degeneracy (9.108–114)—though it reveals some traces of near-eastern folktale motifs, and of Persian administrative practice (Sancisi-Weerdenburg (1988))—by virtue of its position in the *Histories* has been taken to imply that the defeat in Greece marked the beginning of the end of the Persian empire.[66] Moreover, beyond the image of the king's lust for revenge and world dominion—both actual features of Persian court ideology[67]—Herodotus can provide us with little idea of the Persians' strategic aims: he gives little sense, for example, of military activity in the east of the empire.[68]

However, any attempt to reconstruct such a long-term strategy seems inevitably to fall back on the material he provides. A recent 'reassessment' of the history of the Persian Wars by a historian of Persia, for example, seeks to replace the 'Herodotean' model—whereby Persian *hybris* and despotism are defeated by Greek (or Athenian) democracy—by an interpretation which emphasizes how (in Thucydides' verdict, 1.69.5) the Persians were defeated by their own errors: if the Persians had been able to avoid battle at Salamis, the Greek alliance would have fractured (Balcer (1989)). The 'Herodotean' version of the war here is no more than a caricature, however; Thucydides' judgment indeed might justifiably be described as an accurate paraphrase of Herodotus' account of the war.

This failed reassessment might be taken, finally, as a parable of our dependence on Herodotus, and of the consistent underestimation of his account by modern readers. It would be wrong, however, to

[65] See Bickermann (1963), Harrison (2000a) ch. 8.

[66] Sancisi-Weerdenburg (1989) reprinted as Ch. 25 in this volume, Briant (1989); contrast Young (1988) 71, 77–8.

[67] Young (1988) 69; cf. Kent (1953) DB.

[68] Though contrast 1.153.3.

conclude even on this note of qualified approval—to applaud the complexity of Herodotus' presentation of causation, or his relative lack of partisanship. For, ultimately, this would be to judge Herodotus by too mean a measure. His purpose is greater: the celebration of human achievement and diversity—of the 'great and marvellous deeds of Greeks and barbarians'—and of the reversals in human fortune that reveal the influence of the divine in history.[69] The greatest of these reversals was the Persian expedition to Greece.

[69] See Harrison (2000b) ch. 2, esp. 62–3.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

THE PERSONALITY OF XERXES, KING OF KINGS*

Heleen Sancisi-Weerdenburg

To Louis Vanden Berghe, with warm gratitude

A first glance at the current manuals on Persian history would suggest that we are well acquainted with the personality of Xerxes, king of the Achaemenid empire from his accession in 486 till his murder in 465. Born the son of Atossa, the daughter of Cyrus the Great, during the kingship of his father Darius he was raised mostly in the harem (Plato *Leges* 694D). His father nominated him as his successor (XPf 30–32, Hdt. 7.1–2) either for dynastic reasons or because of the influence of his mother at court. Soon after his accession to the throne he had to cope with rebellions in Egypt and Babylonia. The Babylonian revolt in particular was the prelude to a new policy towards subject populations: Xerxes did not attempt to continue the well-known Achaemenid policy of respecting national and religious feelings reflected in titles such as 'king of Babylon, king of lands', but henceforth called himself merely 'king of lands', thus showing overt disregard for Babylonian national pride most clearly demonstrated by the removal of the cult-statue of Marduk from its sanctuary (Hdt. 1.183). A few years later he ventured on an expedition against Greece at the head of an enormous army that was brought together after three years of preparations.

Notwithstanding the huge expedition-force and a few initial successes, Xerxes' fleet was defeated at Salamis and the king departed hastily from Greek soil, leaving behind his general Mardonius and a number of picked troops. Mardonius did not fare better than his master and in 479 the remainder of the Persian army was destroyed at Plataea. Back in his own territory Xerxes apparently gave up

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plans for a conquest of Greece and devoted his time to two matters: building and women. On this second matter, we are apparently 'well-informed': apart from Herodotus' mention of the intervention of Atossa in the succession to the throne (7.3), and another reference to the behaviour of Amestris, Xerxes' wife, who had sacrificed in old age seven young Persian men and seven girls to the god of the underworld as a substitute for herself (Hdt. 7.114), we have the famous episode of Xerxes' infatuation with his niece Artaynte, a dramatic story that resulted in the death of Xerxes' full brother Masistes and his whole family (9.108–113). Xerxes' building-activities are very well known, both from the extant remains and from a number of inscriptions. Much of what is now still visible at Persepolis, was completed or constructed during Xerxes' reign, in particular the most impressive palace, the Apadana, was finished by him. His portrait once adorned the central and most conspicuous place on the reliefs but was removed to the Treasury at some point after his death, possibly as a result of the confused situation at court after the palace-conspiracy to which not only Xerxes, but also his designated successor and eldest son Darius fell victim.

The Sources

These biographical outlines are based on a variety of sources: the most important and most elaborate being Herodotus' description of Xerxes' campaign in books six to nine of the *Histories*. Evidence from other sources, royal inscriptions, Babylonian documents and archeological evidence complements or confirms the picture. As a result, our conclusions on the personality of Xerxes, his character and psychological demeanor seem well established: he was a bigot, passionate and a neurasthenic (Dunlop 1912: 74), he was self-righteous (Cook 1983: 122), he was very much in the shadow of, and under the influence of his father (Frye 1983: 126), a sovereign of indolent nature (Arborio Mella 1979: 72), no easy master (Burn 1985: 331), a womaniser whose most impressive construction was the harem-building (Nyberg 1954: 98), a creature motivated by passion rather than by reason (Immerwahr 1966: 177). In short, Xerxes was a weak personality whose faults showed mostly in his religious fanaticism, in his aesthetic enjoyment of beautiful surroundings and he wasted his time on women of pernicious influence at the cost of state-affairs.

These statements on Xerxes' character are taken from both scholarly and more popular discussions of the Persian empire. It is not difficult to expand this randomly chosen small collection of samples:[1] There seems to be almost general agreement as to history's verdict on Xerxes: a second rate personality and not really worthy of the throne of his father.

It is remarkable that this picture of Xerxes, based for the larger part on Greek sources, whose hellenocentric bias was recognised long ago, underwent no changes after the discovery of inscriptions by Xerxes himself, the Daiva and the Harem-inscription in 1935 and XP1 in 1967. On the contrary, these new documents seemed to confirm the judgment of religious intolerance and of inadequacy in comparison to his father Darius. Taking together all the evidence it seems as if there are few monarchs in the ancient world whose personality and psychological motivations are so well known to us as Xerxes.

In recent years some criticism has been proffered of this traditional, virtually unchanging portrait of Xerxes. The evidence for a change of religious policy in Xerxes' reign is far less firm than has been concluded generally: the famous passage of Herodotus on the removal of the cult-statue of Marduk has been misread (Kuhrt & Sherwin-White 1987: 71 f.), there is (new as well as overlooked) evidence that the titulary in Babylon did not change in as drastic a way as has often been assumed (*ibid.*: 72 f.), the famous Daiva-inscription is not a complete *novum* but an elaboration of statements already formulated in DB V (Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1980: 16 ff.). In other respects too, similar criticisms may be made. This could result in some small corrections of the prevailing ideas on Xerxes' character but it may be more appropriate to investigate how this image originated, on what sources it is based and what kind of reliable information these sources are likely to yield. This is a question that is equally relevant to much other information on the Persian empire. For many chronological and factual data we have to rely on Greek sources. Knowledge handed down from antiquity has acquired the sanctioning of tradition: the Greeks had been there, had observed and had come into close contact with the Persians. Their reports are treated as primary evidence, while neglecting one of the most

[1] Cf. Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1980: 33 for further examples.

fundamental historical rules of dealing with sources. In the case of Xerxes the usual procedure is as follows: corroboration is sought in Persian sources for what we know from Herodotus that Xerxes must have been like, and not the other way round. If we know from a (clearly novelistic) tale in the *Histories* that Xerxes had a love-affair (and so what: are there any monarchs who have never used their exalted position in order to seduce a beautiful girl?) this 'fact' can be used to interpret Xerxes' building policy which leads furthermore to the 'conclusion' that is understandable that the 'Harem' was Xerxes' most impressive building (if the usually so-called building was indeed a harem, cf. De Francovich 1966: 209).

This type of reasoning consists of a number of doubtful links. First, it is by no means certain if Greek descriptions of Xerxes provide us with hard *facts* about the king's character. On the contrary, there is sufficient reason to think, as I will discuss below, that this is not the case. Secondly, the building of a royal residence is the result of a great number of factors, including ancient cultural traditions, newly introduced elements from surrounding cultures, the availability of models, material and craftsmen, administrative, bureaucratic, but also ideological and legitimising needs. In short, a king can express his wishes or even impose his whims, but this is hardly more than one factor in a very complex system and rarely the determining one. In the superficial connection, traditionally made between the personality of Xerxes and the documents from the heartland of the empire, the state is usually regarded as a one-man-show and the forces and momentum of the Iranian and Mesopotamian traditions are often completely overlooked. This third point violates one of the most fundamental historical rules, namely that each source should primarily be evaluated on its own merits and within its cultural surroundings. The case of Xerxes is particularly illuminating as it demonstrates how pervasive the often mentioned hellenocentric bias in our views of ancient Persia really is. The psychological portrait of Xerxes in Herodotus is used as a collection of established facts which moreover are squeezed far beyond their original extent. What is essentially a *Greek* picture of an oriental monarch is transformed, by reading into the Persian evidence this previous 'knowledge', into a description of a *Persian* king.

It is appropriate to question the whole procedure and to attempt to assess what our sources are worth. As I will argue in this paper, although Herodotus' portrayal of Xerxes is persuasive and beauti-

fully elaborated, it contains very little that a historian could use as hard evidence for the *character* of the king and it should therefore not be used to elucidate enigmatic points in the Persian sources. Elsewhere I have discussed Xerxes' inscriptions (Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1980, ch. 1). In this paper I will concentrate on the Greek side of the story.

Herodotus

Herodotus, on whose information we are mostly dependent for Xerxes' reign, was hardly a contemporary of the Great King. He collected his information in the period after the Persian wars and probably after the death of Xerxes as well. It should be stressed that there is every reason to agree with Momigliano's judgment (1979: 150) of Herodotus as a historian with far more 'intellectual generosity' than any of his later fellow-Greeks. Complete impartiality is beyond any historian, but Herodotus at least made a very serious attempt to give the Persians a fair deal. He was, however, a historian and had to tell his story: he collected, organised and arranged his material. If one realises the conditions under which he accomplished this task, one cannot but admire the impressive results.

Still, as in any work of historiography, the way in which information is chosen, elaborated and inserted affects the reliability of the evidence. Herodotus is by no means the teller of an unorganised number of stories and the indiscriminating reporter of a consecutive series of hearsay accounts. His presence as a narrator is clearly evident throughout his work, even if in some parts more markedly so than in others (Immerwahr 1977; Marincola 1987; Dewald 1987). In the light of the initial question with which Herodotus opens his work "to preserve the memory of the past by putting on record the astonishing achievements both of our own and of the Asiatic peoples; secondly and more particularly, to show how the two races came into conflict" (Hdt. 1.1), the king of Persia who actually led his army to the battle with the Greeks is given an important place in the story.

Herodotus, however, is far more cautious than some of his modern commentators: Xerxes is not the only person responsible for the campaign; the course of history is not determined by personal decisions or individual actions alone. Although some persons may

have more influence on what is going to happen than others, much attention is paid to factors that are beyond the grasp of individual human beings. In the discussion between Xerxes and his councillors on the plans for the campaign against Greece, it is divine intervention in the form of a dream which finally convinces Xerxes to act (7.18). Still, because of his exalted position, the king of Persia has greater freedom of action than any of the other personalities. This, it should be realised, is Herodotus' vision: Xerxes, like the other characters in the *Histories*, are pieces on Herodotus' chessboard that he moves according to the rules, but the resulting game is Herodotus' own. To extend this metaphor, we might ask which are Herodotus' pieces, what are the rules of the game and what moves he makes to obtain the desired result.

Much attention has been paid to Herodotus' sources. There is no need to discuss this problem here in detail. Judged by the way in which Herodotus presents his information, it can be divided into roughly three kinds: a) complete tales which probably reached Herodotus as such (e.g. the Pythios story and the Masistes-tale), b) actions of Xerxes based on hearsay or on reports of eyewitnesses (e.g. Xerxes' behaviour at Abydos, at Thermopylae and during the battle of Salamis) and c) discussions of Xerxes with his advisers such as Artabanus, Demaratus, Artemisia etc. If our interest is mainly in Xerxes' personality, the value of these different types of information is rather variable. What, for instance does a novelistic tale say about the real character of one of its main actors? How well were the Greeks able to distinguish between the role of an eastern monarch, far more surrounded by ritual and ceremonial prescriptions than they were accustomed to in their own surroundings, and the personality of the incumbent of the office? Does the fact that Xerxes witnessed the sea-battle at Salamis seated on his chair and not actively engaged in combat as a Greek commander might be, say anything about his character or does it rather reveal something of the role a Persian king was expected to perform?

As to the discussions between Xerxes and his chief councillors, it is clear that if eye-witnesses had been present at all, the report they might have given would have become rather distorted in the course of the fifty years between the Persian wars and the composition of the *Histories*. In these cases especially it is most likely that Herodotus directly remoulded or recreated his material. The Greek information we have of Xerxes' character thus consists of eye-witness reports

which in all probability contain an ethnocentric bias: it is hard enough to judge the character and personality of someone in office within one culture, but it is nearly impossible to make similar evaluations if one does not have a solid grasp of the cultural codes and the institutionalised behaviour required in an entirely different culture.

The famous episode of Xerxes chastising the Hellespont has usually been interpreted as proof of Xerxes' violent and irascible temper: our knowledge of ritual and religious behaviour of Persian kings is so limited that the assumption of Xerxes acting out his personal anger is hazardous, even if Herodotus clearly describes Xerxes acting in such terms. But even when Herodotus explicitly mentions a Persian custom, it is often interpreted as a personal action as, for example, in the case of the human sacrifice of Amestris in 7.114.[2]

Xerxes and women

The 'short stories' in the *Histories* in which Xerxes figures are equally problematic sources for the person of the king: they probably originated in a popular narrative tradition and there is no reason to suppose that they contain much solid evidence. It has been argued for other similar stories that the pattern was much older than the figures named in it (Lord 1970: 27; see also ch. 13, this volume.). In another context, the term gene-pool of story-motifs has been used (Griffiths 1987: 37). Some of these tales contain a number of motifs that can be found in similar stories about other persons. The famous story of Xerxes' love for his niece Artaynte has some parallels in the Book of Esther (cf. Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1980: 63) and a very striking parallel in the story of Herodias (Matthew 14, 1–12). It is this tale that is responsible for Xerxes' reputation as a sensual person, easily carried away by his passions and above all a womaniser "who was unable to control his entourage firmly" (Hignett 1963: 89). History judges easily, although it should be noted that Herodotus is more prudent than many of his later colleagues. His portrait of Xerxes is far removed from the simplistic depiction of a tyrant (Gammie 1986: 183). Herodotus shows how the king is caught in a

[2] Cf. Legrand, comm. on Hdt. 9.109: "Amestris . . . devait jusqu'à ses vieux jours faire preuve d'une impitoyable cruauté".

tragic entanglement between the prescriptions of his office, the law that the king should give whatever he is asked for, and the partly unforeseen consequences of the fulfilment of this rule. One could say that Xerxes' generosity to his niece in this tale is too unreserved, but there is, as far as I can see, no element in the story which warrants a judgment of the king as an abuser of his royal power to seduce women. On the contrary, in the prologue to the most dramatic part of the story, Xerxes' infatuation with Artaynte and its subsequent disastrous results, the king uses neither threats nor violence but apparently accepts his rejection by his sister-in-law, who originally was the object of Xerxes' love. This story and this story alone has earned Xerxes the reputation of being a weakling who was controlled by the women around him. Even if the tale could be demonstrated to be a piece of historiography it seems a bit harsh to base a bad reputation on a single incident and furthermore to define it as the cause of the gradual decline of a whole empire.

There are three other incidents involving women in the recorded events of Xerxes' life: one involves his mother, two his wife. Thus, his accession to the throne is supposed to be due to the influence of Atossa, his mother. Yet, nowhere else does Herodotus mention Atossa as still alive during the later part of Xerxes' life and he gives no clue as to the relationship between mother and son. There is equally no trace in the *Histories* of the influence of queen Amestris on her husband. Rather the opposite: in the Artaynte episode she has to wait for a formal occasion to obtain the revenge she desires. Proof of her vindictive nature is rather poor: motives for human sacrifice, however abhorrent they may seem to us, are more frequently the result of religious codes than personal feelings of vanity and cruelty. Xerxes' relations with women, as reported by Herodotus, is much more a tragic story of a king caught between duty and fate, than of the lecherous monarch modern commentators have found in the Artaynte-story. In the situation described it is not so much the seductive powers of women which place Xerxes in a difficult situation, but the obligation to adhere to his royal duty and not to go back on his promise.[3]

[3] Flory's conclusion that Xerxes "is even less intelligent than Candaules for he

Xerxes' personality in Herodotus

Although Herodotus' sources clearly did not provide reliable material to analyse Xerxes' psychological development, it is very much a personality which we meet on the pages of the *Histories*. While it is a matter of debate whether the elements of Xerxes' behaviour taken together represent a gradual character-evolution, it seems beyond doubt that in his text Herodotus has modelled and sculptured the person of Xerxes. Laughter at what we know from hindsight to be inappropriate moments marks for instance those tragic situations where Xerxes underestimates the potential consequences of his actions or orders. As Lateiner has argued: "few laughs are recorded for posterity. They are most often sub-historical non-events" (1977: 175). The main function of such laughs, which unavoidably signal disaster, is to create a pattern which "helps the account carry a non-explicit interpretation" (*ibid.*: 182). In other words, laughter and other non-verbal forms of communication are Herodotus' means of constructing the text in order to form a comprehensible explanation of what had happened while at the same time creating tension between the participants' observation of the events in the immediate future and historical knowledge of what really happened. At certain moments this tension is made more dramatic by explicit predictions of doom as e.g. in the Artaynte-story: "her whole family was bound to come to a bad end" (9.109). Whatever Artaynte does, whatever Xerxes replies, disaster is forecast and inevitable. Weeping may also serve to enhance the discrepancy between helpless inaction and the course the events are to take: when Xerxes bursts into tears after his inspection of the army and fleet at Abydos (7.45), Herodotus' description of the event and the subsequent conversation with his uncle Artabanus signals less the hybristic monarch than a man who is prepared to take reasonable risks and follow in the footsteps of his predecessors on the Persian throne (7.8). Fate (δαιμονίη τις γίνεται ὁρμή), as Artabanus says, 7.18) meanwhile has decided that things will happen differently from what could be foreseen. It is only with

twice makes dangerous promises and is unable to learn from the unfortunate results not to make the second" (1978: 152) underestimates the fact that the occasion of Amestris' request was a customary one (9.111) and that Xerxes was compelled by law (ὑπὸ τοῦ νόμου ἐξεργόμενος). He not only could not have refused, even avoidance of the occasion was beyond his power, as Herodotus recognises.

hindsight that we know his calculations were wrong; even a number of Greek cities at the time of Xerxes' campaign were not particularly confident of Greek victory. This is not the right place to discuss the elements of Xerxes' characterisation in Herodotus' text. Very often the emphasis has been put on the Persian king's hybristic behaviour. There are, however, several factors in his portraiture by Herodotus which add up to a tragic Xerxes, a man unable to escape fate. A further analysis of the text and a close scrutiny of the relevant passages may result in a better understanding of Herodotus' insight into the interrelation between the destined course of events and human interference in history. Here it is only necessary to note that the Xerxes of the *Histories* is as much a product of Herodotus' sources as of the author's conscious construction of his narrative. If we are discussing the psychology of Xerxes in Herodotus' account, we are in fact dealing with Herodotus' historical understanding and with his techniques for writing up the results of his investigations. There are at least several layers between the personality of Xerxes, as king of Persia and as commander of his armies during the Greek expedition. The uppermost of these layers is Herodotus' careful and convincing representation, which makes us feel as if we are encountering a real life personality. But we should be warned that what we read is "neither fact nor fiction but 'transfigured tradition'" (Lateiner 1987: 103).[4]

The sources from Persia

The persuasiveness of Herodotus' portrait plus the fact that centuries of historiography on the Persian empire were based on the Greek sources is probably responsible for the strange situation that the Greek evidence is used to explain puzzles in the Persian sources, which, if studied on their own merits, would not have been puzzling at all. This is most strikingly so in the case of Xerxes' inscriptions which have been studied, analysed and complemented in the certainty that the Greek sources contained 'established facts'. The *Daiva*-inscription read in this light thus presented confirmation of the fact

[4] Lateiner adds: "interpretation and reconstruction structure the amorphous data of every historical investigation" (*Ibid.*)

that Xerxes who, in Herodotus' account, carefully listens to his religious advisers, as, it should be noted, a king ought, was a religious fanatic and bigot, who deviated from the famous religious tolerance practised by his predecessors. Studied on its own merits the *Daiva*-inscription shows a striking continuity with especially the last column of DB: one might conclude that instead of deviating, Xerxes' policy was a further articulation of the programme set out by his father (Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1980: 35). On the whole, the formulaic character of the inscriptions has been undervalued. Too often they are read as the personal statements of individuals, underestimating the forces of a tradition, be it a written or an oral literary one, which set certain limits to personal ideas of kings who, as seems to be generally agreed, were themselves illiterate and had at least to dictate to scribes who knew the appropriate words and phrases. Apart from the influence of our hellenocentric bias, the importance of ritual surrounding the king's office is underestimated: kings are kings in a tradition, their office is based on continuity, their sayings are not expressions of their particular state of mind on a specific occasion but royal declarations of the state of affairs. When Xerxes repeats the same lines in the inscription found in 1967 in Persepolis as Darius did in the inscription on his tomb, the only possible conclusion is: this is what a Persian king ought to say, this is what Persian kingship—and not the incidental holder of the office—should look like.[5] Before assuming that two different types of evidence confirm each other, it should be analysed whether in fact they do contain the same kind of information. In the case of the Xerxes of the inscriptions and the Xerxes of Herodotus, there is no justification in using

[5] Cf. Cook 1983: 69 on the inscriptions: "Of all the kings Darius I was much the most loquacious in his inscriptions, indeed he was even introspective. Xerxes came second to him; but a long text of his found near Persepolis in 1967 repeats *in his own name what his father had said in a very personal vein about himself* at Naqsh-i Rustam (DNb), so it may not be entirely cynical to wonder whether even his celebrated 'daiwa inscription' may not also turn out to be *less original* than has been supposed (ital. H.S.-W.). It is not at all cynical: a new copy of XPh, in the name of Xerxes or Darius would only be a missing part in the development of a royal ideology, for which, at present we have only evidence from early in Darius' reign and from Xerxes' reign. Cook's verdict stems from a mistaken belief in the individual character of the texts, which in turn depends on the fact that the Greek sources portray the kings as individual human beings. Even an Iranist such as Frye (1983: 121) thus comes to the following statement on XPh: "Only Xerxes among the Achaemenid kings showed strong feelings about religion".

the data as complementary to each other. The inscriptions provide information on the royal ideology, the *Histories* give insight into the Greek vision of an eastern monarch. In Persian surroundings we do not find any evidence that can be used for constructing a psychological portrait of Xerxes, or of any of the other rulers of the Achaemenid empire. This is most clearly illustrated by the Persepolis and the Naqš-i Rustam reliefs and the problems caused in trying to identify the kings sculptured in various positions and in various places. If not by an accompanying inscription or by the headgear they are wearing, it is impossible to identify which king is depicted.[6] This can hardly be due to inability of the sculptors, who in all likelihood were capable of giving some individuality to a portrait if necessary or required. Again, the conclusion is justified that, if individual kings are indeed portrayed, it is above all the unchanging traditional aspects of kingship that were emphasised and expressed.

If we want to study the Achaemenid empire on its own terms, it should be approached from this angle: how are tradition and innovation reflected in the extant documentation? Before connecting processes, which had their own momentum, with the interference (or lack of action) of specific kings, it should be realised that many of the questions we have been asking show the same helleno-centric bias as our results. Seen from a Persian point of view, the reign of Xerxes may well turn out to be the glorious high point of Achaemenid history and not the moment at which decline set in.

[6] As e.g. in the case of the Treasury-reliefs. Porada (1985: 816–9) sees Darius as the enthroned king, mainly for stylistic reasons, against Von Gall (1974: 148 ff.) who has pointed out that the king on the throne does not have the crown with crenelations which is characteristic for Darius.

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GENERAL INDEX

Abydos 564, 587
Achaemenid empire: *see* Persia
Adda-guppi 486
Adyrmachidae 461
Aegina 340, 497, 503, 517, 527–8, 547
Aeschylus 173, 194, 510, 571–2
Aethiopia 403–5
aetiological myths 560
Agariste 504
Agathyrsi 461
agriculture 462, 472
aidōs 208
aitiē 4, 7, 13, 17–19, 85–6
Ajax 188
Alcaeus 510, 513
Alcm(a)eonids 40–2, 211, 504, 534–6, 543, 547, 573–4
Alcuadae 559
Alexander I 382–3
Alexandropol 452
alterity: *see* 'Other'
Aly, W. 247
Alyattes 502, 511
Amasis 332, 423–4, 426, 434, 503, 517
Amazons 453
Amel-Marduk 486
Amestris 580, 585
Ammon 358
Amompharetus 562, 565
Anacharsis 279, 376, 444, 455
analogy 156, 280
anaphora 60, 66
Anaxandridas 515
Anaximander 156–68, 419
andreia 368; *see also* bravery
Androphagi 367, 462, 465
Annequin, J. 234
Anthylla 328
Antidorus of Lesbos 562
ants, gold-digging 465, 470, 472, 474
Apadana 580
Aphrodite 442, 449–50
apodexis 4, 8–12, 20–26, 28–32, 269
Apollo 187–8, 191, 195, 450; *see also* Delphi
Apries 332, 423–4, 426, 525
Arabia, Arabians 461, 464–5, 468–9, 474
Arcadia, Arcadians 326, 338, 381
Arcesilaus of Cyrene 507–8, 516–17
Archias of Pitana 374, 376–7, 500, 527
Archilochus 510
archives, royal Babylonian 483; royal Persian 576; temple 483–4
Ardericca 479
Ares 197, 450
aretē 203–4
Argippaei 462–5, 473
Argonauts 497
Argos 338, 341–2, 345, 502, 505, 546–7
Arimaspians 445, 465, 472–3
Arion 512
Aristagoras 157, 385, 508, 529–34, 557–8
Aristeas 361, 444–5, 466, 472–3
Aristeides 519, 574
Aristodemus 562
Aristodicus of Cyme 381
Aristogeiton 326, 535
Aristophanes 510, 514
Aristotle 443, 469, 474, 514–15
arkhē 328 n. 14, 341; *see also* imperialism
Armenia 477
Arrian 474
Artabanus 175, 182, 559, 569–70, 584, 587
Artaphernes 539, 557–8
Artaxerxes I 341, 490, 495
Artaxerxes II 493, 495
Artayctes 347–8, 553, 559, 567
Artaynte 580, 585–7
Artemis 188, 189, 197
Artemisia 240–1, 267, 568–70, 584
Artemisium 190–2, 359–60, 561, 565
Artoxerxes: *see* Artaxerxes I
Arzhan 451
Ascalon 331
Ashdod 323
Asia 415, 553–7, 561

Assyria 327, 330–2, 335–6, 475, 485–96, 511
Astyages 128–9
Asychis 422–3
Atarantes 468
atasthalia 188, 193–94
Athena 188, 189
Athens, Athenian(s) 381, 385, 500, 502–3, 513, 517–19, 533–45; empire 166, 169–70, 174, 178; ideology 152–3, 561, 572; imperialism 549, 553, 567; power of 337–8, 340; role of, in Persian wars 42–3, 341–2, 347–8, 382–3, 568, 574–5
Atlantes 464, 470
Atossa 579–80, 586
atrekeōs 360–2
Atthidographers 514
Augila 466
austerity: *see* luxury
authority 279, 351–2, 356
autochthony 326
Autonoos 188, 189
autopsy 13–15, 278, 355–6, 419, 424, 442–4

Babylonia, Babylonian(s) 197, 325, 330–1, 333, 475–96, 511; astronomical texts 484; chronicles 482, 485; customs 494–5; government 495; palaces 483, 491–2, 496; population 494–5; revolt 579; royal titles 489–90, 579, 581; texts 484, 488–9
Bacchiads 518, 544
Bacis 358
Badian, E. 380, 382, 392
Bakhtin 276
Bakker, E. J. 55
barbarians 105, 364–7; *see also* 'Other'
Barca 345
Bardiya 488
barrows: *see* burial mounds
battle narratives 564–5
Battles: of Champions 502, 515; of Hysiae 508; of Sybota 558; of the Fetters 515
Battus, Battiads 383, 506–7
Bauman, R. 277–8
beauty 563, 566
bees 471
Behistun 488, 493
Bel 475, 478, 489, 491
Bel'sk 454
Berezan 454
bias 522; *see also* Herodotus, bias in
Bias of Priene 513, 556
Blok, A. 453
Boeotia 511, 548
Boer, W. den 388, 392
Bornitz, H.-F. 251
Borst, A. 412
Borysthenes, Borysthenites 443, 465
Bosporus 511
boundaries 172–3, 330, 465, 554, 556
bravery 323, 368, 561–2, 564, 566
bribery 569
Brillante, C. 114
Budini 465
burial mounds 451–4
Burkert, W. 391, 410
Byzantium 443

Calame, C. 113
calendar 387, 401; *see also* chronology
Callatians 366, 461
Calliades, archonship of 334, 501
Callicrates 562
Callippidae 440, 446
Cambyses 130–1, 193, 333–5, 437, 466–7, 487–8, 503, 524
Candaules 55–8, 192, 368
cannibalism 461–4
Carbonell, C.-O. 252–3
Caria, Carians 325, 499
Cassiterides 471
catalogue of ships 103
cavalry 565, 577
Chalcis 509, 511
Chaldaeans 475, 478–80, 489
Chantraine, P. 362
characterisation 423–4, 579–90
Cheops 424, 429, 511
Chephren 424
Chertomlyk 452–3
Chilon 515
Chios 502, 531
chronology 329–34, 387–8, 390–2, 407, 421–2, 439, 497, 499–504; *see also spatium historicum*, synchronism
'chunking', in sentence structure 54–5, 59–64, 67, 70; literary use of 62–3, 77
Cimmerians 323, 331, 440
Cimon 211
cinnamon 465, 469

Cleisthenes of Athens 337–8, 504, 518, 538–41
Cleisthenes of Sicyon 503–4, 517, 538, 542
Cleomenes 193, 348, 357, 385, 500, 515, 532–3, 538–9, 545–8
climate 443, 445, 464
Coates, G. 427
Cobet, J. 110, 251–2
Cole, T. 9
colonization 378, 383
Connor, W. R. 14, 179–80
Constitutional Debate 528, 534, 542–5; *see also* government, forms of
contact 555–6, 558
Corcyra 502–3
Corinth 339, 385, 502–3, 512, 516, 542, 544–5
counsel, lack of: *see* 'wise adviser'
craftsmen 385
Crete 499, 506–7
Croesus 35–6, 132–7, 162, 167–74, 188, 193, 196, 218–20, 287, 330, 335–6, 344, 346–7, 351–2, 357, 369, 395, 406, 409, 502–3, 511, 554
crucifixion 348
Ctesias 460, 465, 469, 472, 571
cults 560
cultures, 'soft' and 'hard' 480, 482, 532–3
custom: *see nomos*
Cybebe 346
Cyclopes 461, 464
Cylon 504, 513
Cyprus 332–3, 344, 477, 481
Cypselids 542
Cypselus 127, 501, 516, 544
Cyrene 334, 383–4, 505–8, 516–17, 519
Cyrus 129, 162, 188, 274, 332–3, 336, 339, 477–8, 487, 554; birth of 110–11
Cythera 568

Daiva inscription 581, 588–9
Darbo-Peschanski, C. 280–1, 287
Darius 187, 323, 333, 335, 341, 344–5, 366, 437, 439, 441, 448, 456, 477, 488, 503, 556–8, 579, 589
Darius Codomannus 469
Darius II Ochus 495
Dark Age 411
date palm 477, 480, 493
Davies, J. K. 384
De Jong, I. J. F. 253
deixis 29–32, 269
Delos 510
Delphi, Delphic oracle 187, 189–90, 199–200, 279, 282, 357, 369, 378–9, 381, 384, 499, 502, 506, 511–12, 527–8, 536, 546–7, 571, 574
Demaratus 111, 126, 161, 182, 192, 348, 357, 545–6, 566, 568, 575, 584
Demeter 188, 189, 195
Democedes 345, 556–7
democracy 325, 327, 374–5, 385, 514, 529–30, 534–45, 549, 577; *see also* freedom
Demonax of Mantineia 516
descriptions 254, 262–3
deserts 465
destiny: *see* fate
Deutsche Orient Gesellschaft 491
deviant focalization 284
Dewald, C. 173, 234–6, 271–2, 277, 362
dialogic 18, 276
Dieneces 562–3
digressions: *see Histories*, digressions in
Dik, H. 56
Dionysius of Phocaea 531
Dionysus 197
discourse analysis 53–77
discourse topic 56–8, 68–70, 72, 74–6; *see also* topic
divine envy/jealousy 215, 532–3, 559–61; *see also* gods, religion
Dodecarchs 421, 423–4
Dodona 196, 374
Dorians 326–7, 497, 503
Dougherty, C. 114
Dracon 513
dreams 103, 110, 175, 194–6, 559
dual determination 561; *see also* gods, religion
dynastic sequence 400–2, 406; *see also* chronology; genealogy

Egibi family 484, 494
Egypt, Egyptians 14–16, 19, 20, 155, 157, 159–60, 196–8, 267, 274, 278–9, 282, 325–9, 331–2, 354–5, 365, 387, 396, 401–3, 407, 410, 415–35, 437, 442, 444–5, 448, 497, 499–501; building works 422–3; daily life 433–4; economy 429–30;

history 334, 420–7; kingship 420–7; physical traits 420; religion 430–2; society 420, 427–8
elenkhos 352
eleutheria: *see* freedom, democracy
Eleutheria (festival) 190
embassies 481
empires, rise and fall of 328–36; *see also* imperialism, fortune
Enarees 442, 449
Eneti 472
Ephialtes 561
Ephorus 474, 508
epic poetry, influence of 27–8, 97–109, 322, 352; *see also* Homer
epic rhythm 103
Epidaurus 497
epideixis, epideictic 9–10, 21–2, 107
Erbse, H. 105
Eretria 509–10
erga (*megala*) 4, 24–8, 31, 99, 282–3, 503; *see also thōmata*
Eridanus 471
es eme 322
eskhatiai 457
Esther 585
Etemenanki 491
Ethiopia, Ethiopians 197, 281, 461, 464, 466–7, 462–3, 554, 556
ethnicity, *see* Greek identity
ethnography 13–15, 17, 332, 378, 415–19, 434–5, 457–74
Euboea 344
Eupalinus' tunnel 503
Euphemus 383–4
Euphrates 475, 477, 480, 485, 491
Euripides 150, 154, 161
Europa 497
Europe 415, 470–2, 553, 561
Eusebius 391, 393, 411
Evans, J. A. S. 163
Exampaeus 442
excursuses: *see Histories*, digressions in
expeditions 465–6
expert's persona 268, 286, 288; *see also* Herodotus as a critic

faction fighting 537–9, 541
fame: *see kleos*
family traditions: *see* oral tradition
fate 192–3, 431, 558, 587–8
Fehling, D. 353–4, 374, 378–9
First Sacred War 384
flashbacks (*analepses*) 263–6
'floating gap': *see* chronology, *spatium historicum*
Floyd, E. 16
Focke, F. 248
focus 54, 57–8, 61, 64
food: *see* luxury
Fornara, C. 152, 179–80, 551
Forsdyke, S. 537
fortune, changeability of 172, 177, 328, 357, 523, 578; *see also* fate
Fowler, R. 153
Fraenkel, H. 247–8
freedom 336, 342, 420, 529, 534, 565–6; *see also* democracy
funerals 461

Gandarae 470
Garamantes 462
Ge 450
Gelon 341, 548
Gelonus 440, 446, 454
gender 364, 367–9; *see also* masculinity, women
genealogy 155, 324, 390–1, 401, 410, 497, 502
generation, length of 501
geography 4, 14, 159, 181, 360–1, 415, 441–2, 457, 560
Getae 439
Gillus of Taras 345–6
Gimmirri 440
gnomē 15, 23–4, 278
Gobryas 487–8
gods: *see* Herodotus, gods in
Golden Age 460, 462–4, 467
Gorgias 7, 160
Gorgo 533
Gould, J. 180, 376, 380–1, 384
government, forms of 463, 518–20; *see also* Constitutional Debate
Gray, V. 240
Greek colonies, in the Black Sea 441, 444, 453, 471–2
Greek identity, challenged 324–8
Greeks, superiority of 335, 565–6; weakness of 328, 337–43; *see also* 'Other'
Griffiths, A. 547
Gyges 510

Halicarnassos inscription 97
Halys 330
Hammurabi 491
Harem inscription 581

Harmodius 326, 535
Harrison, T. 354, 384
Hartog, F. 280, 365
Hecataeus 100, 157, 159, 267, 401, 415, 419, 445, 467–8, 473–4, 497, 504
hēgemonia 328 n. 14, 342; *see also* imperialism
Helen of Troy 354–6, 497
Hellenocentrism 581–2, 584–5, 589–90
Hellespont 585
hemp-inhaling 450
Heracles 197, 274, 278, 282, 450, 497
Heraclitus 100, 158
herms 325
Herodias 585
Herodotus: and Athens 33–52; as a critic 322–3, 337, 348–9, 351–71, 374, 381–3, 385–6, 419, 425–6, 457, 459–60, 504–5, 513 (*see also* expert's persona); as 'actor' 278; as a researcher 13–15, 28–29, 158–59, 278–79; authorial voice of 11, 183, 267–89; becoming a historian 4, 177, 181; bias in 378–80, 382, 573–5; causation in 522–3, 528–30, 556–9 (*see also* war, causes of); comparison with Odysseus 99; cultural background of 152, 67; explanation in 217–24, 497, 502, 504; generalisation in 384–5; generation of 152, 399; gods in 325, 354, 369–70, 379, 384, 431–2, 497, 500, 560–1, 570–1; human tragedy in 502; intellectual outlook of 153–86; knowledge of Halicarnassos 267; 'literary personality' of 523; reliability 352–3, 358–63, 564, 571–7; religion 183, 187–198, 325–6, 348–9, 381–3, 385, 431–2, 460–1; 'reticence' 380–3, 431–2; selectivity 383–4; showmanship 562; 'silent cities' in 509; synchronisms 502, 563, 575 (*see also* synchronism); use of numbers 441, 564, 575–6; use of oral tradition 376, 425, 504–9, 521–49, 562–3; use of sources 373–86, 424–5, 478–82, 504–9, 583–5; use of written sources 374–5, 510 (*see also* inscriptions); *see also Histories*
heroes 188–9, 497
heroic age 388–89, 407
Hesiod 197, 388–9, 400–1, 431, 500, 510
Hestia 450–1
Himera 502
Hipparchus 196, 274, 500, 501, 535
Hippias 165, 535
Hippocrates, Hippocratic corpus 9, 13–14, 150–1, 153–4, 161–4, 433, 445, 447, 449–50, 464, 512; 'Hippocratic filter' 386
Histiaeus 529–31
histōr 14, 16, 273, 267–89
historical explanation: *see* Herodotus, explanation in
historiē 3–4, 7–10, 12–19, 24, 28–9, 32, 278, 322, 419, 478
Histories: aim of 28–32, 91–3, 179–81, 417; analytic approach to 5; and Aeschylus' *Persians* 137–47; as narration 229–30; as narrative 253–4, 269; audience of 321–2; cross-references in 11–12, 275 'digressions' in 255–7, 321, 415, 418, 459, 500, 555, 560; *graphein* in 88–90; Homeric nature of 6–8, 120, 253–4, 263 (*see also* epic, Homer); juridical nature of 14–18; origin as lectures 8–9, 82, 85, 150, 152, 163; prediscipliniary nature of 5; publication of 4, 8–12, 163; scope of 321; structure of 11–12, 82–8, 253–4, 500, 551, 553, 555, 560, 567; 'tragic' nature of 117–47; unity of 4–5, 246–55, 551; *see also* Herodotus
Homer 97–109, 150, 165, 180, 197, 198, 355, 388–90, 400–1, 405, 411, 415, 419, 431, 461, 466, 473, 500, 510; *see also* epic
honouring one's family 204–8
Hornblower, S. 186, 384
Howald, E. 247
Hunter, V. 158
Hunzinger, C. 360
hybris 174–6, 193–4, 221–2, 341, 577, 587–8
Hyperboreans 466, 473
Hypernotii 467
Immerwahr, H. 5, 250–1, 276

imperialism 328–36, 343–8, 422–3, 506, 530, 553–5, 577; *see also* Athens
Indians 333, 366, 461, 464, 470

inscriptions, deictic orientation of 30; used as evidence 332, 511–12
instability: *see* fortune, fate
internal division in Greek cities 345–6
interpreters 420, 428
intertextuality 373
Io 497
Ionia, Ionians 267, 282, 325, 327, 338–9, 341, 358, 511, 554
Ionian revolt 101–2, 187, 192, 346–7, 398, 509, 528–31, 557
Iraq 479, 485
irony 123–4
irrigation 429–30, 477, 480
Isagoras 501, 538–40
isegoria 537; *see also* democracy
Ishtar gate 492
isonomia 530, 533; *see also* democracy
Issedones 197, 461–2, 464, 472
Issyk 451
Ister 471–2
ius primae noctis 461–2
Iyrcae 462

Jacoby, F. 83 5, 159, 246–7, 377–8, 391–2, 534
James, H. 373–4
Johnson, W. 31
Jong, I. de 105
justice 199–200

Karttunen, K. 465
kleos 8, 10, 27–28, 31, 99, 108, 180, 322
Knossos 499
Kolaios 499, 507, 512, 517
kratos 351
Krischer, T. 6–8
Kuban 452
Kuhrt, Amélie 486
Kul' Oba 453
kurgans: *see* burial mounds

Labynetos 477, 486
Labyrinth 423
Lade 502, 511, 531
Laestrygonians 461
Lake Moeris 333
landscape: *see* geography, topography
Lang, M. 105, 107, 376
language 326
Lateiner, D. 106, 163, 280, 287, 587
laughter, significance of 587
Laurion 568
Lavelle, B. 541
leadership: *see arkhē*, imperialism, *hēgemonia*
Lelantine war 339 n. 40, 384, 508–9
Leleges 337
Leonidas 191
Leotychides 348
Lewis, D. 378
lexis eiromenē 247–8
Libya, Libyans 325–6, 403–4, 415, 443, 459, 461, 463–4, 468, 506
literacy 455
Lloyd, A. B. 354, 392–93, 474
Lloyd, G. E. R. 9
logioi 17–8, 269, 376
logistics 335, 564–5, 570
logos, logoi 17–19, 28, 255, 267–89, 459; *see also* novella, short stories, variant versions
Lotophagi 462
luxury, corrupting power of 172, 201–2, 336, 342, 553–4, 563, 567
Lycia 475
Lycidas 566
Lycopes 527
Lycurgus 338, 500, 515, 519
Lydia, Lydians 324–5, 335–6, 378

Märchen-motifs 441
Macan, R. W. 455–6
Magi 362
makhimoi 420, 428
Malkin, Irad 383
Mandrocles 511
Manteis 194–96
Marathon 187, 192, 381, 518, 547–8, 573, 576
Mardonius 167, 171, 187, 188, 191, 196, 495, 559, 567, 569–70, 579
Marduk 475, 489, 491–3, 579, 581
Marincola, J. 278, 355
marriage 461
marriage-market 481, 494
marvels: *see thōmata*
masculinity 335–6, 342–3, 367–8, 566; *see also* bravery, gender, women
Masistes 580, 584
Massagetae 197, 450, 460, 462–3, 472, 554
mathematical texts 484
Medea 497
Medes 325, 330–1, 335–6, 486
medical writers: *see* Hippocratic corpus

medism 566–9, 573–4
Megara 333
Megasthenes 474
Meier, Chr. 105, 185
Melanchlaeni 445, 465
Meroe 467
messages, secret 530, 546, 563
Messenia 338
Messenian Wars 338, 508, 516
metanarrative statements 274–6
Metapontum 361
mētis 530–1
Meuli, Karl 449
Meyer, E. 391, 410
migration stories 324
Miletus 339, 502, 509–10
military tactics 564–5, 576–7
Millender, E. 527
Miltiades the Elder 545
Miltiades the Younger 211, 379–80, 545
mimetic narrative 106
Min 321, 421–2, 429
Minos 337, 339
Mitchel, F. 391
Moeris 422, 429
Momigliano, A. 385, 583
monarchy 553
moral values 202–17, 328, 426–7, 434–5, 532–3
Mosshammer, A. 390, 396
Munson, R. 276
Murashu family 484
Murray, G. 409
Murray, O. 108, 378, 384, 474, 523
mutilated corpse, theme of 102, 567
Mycerinus 423–4
Myres, J. L. 250, 392, 513
myth, use of 18, 28, 109–16, 118, 159, 345, 405, 407–8, 459, 497, 499
mythical time 110; *see also* chronology; *spatium historicum*
Mytileneans 510

Nabonidus 486–8, 495
Nabopolassar 486
Nabu *ša harê* temple 484
Nagy, G. 10–11, 13–14, 115, 376
Naqš-I Rustam reliefs 590
narrative unit 276
narratology 375
narrator 267–89
Nasamones 461–2, 466, 468
natural disasters 561
Naucratis 424, 430
Naxos 340, 344–5, 502, 530, 557
Nearchus 474
Nebuchadnezzar 488
Nebuchadnezzar II 483, 486, 491, 495
Necho II 332, 423–4, 429
Necos: *see* Necho II
Neo-Babylonian empire 475, 479, 481–96
Neriglissar 486
Neuri 465
New Year Festival (Babylon) 489–90, 492
Nicandra 374
Niger 468
Nile 358, 365, 468
Nineveh 331, 475 475
Nippur 484
Nitocris 424, 429, 477–9, 481, 486, 496, 511, 556
nomads 440, 443–53, 460–74
nomos 418, 459, 464, 479, 555, 566; *see also physis*
non-verbal communication 587
novella 257–8, 427, 434; *see also logos*, short stories

Ober, J. 539–42
Ocean(us) 457, 471–3
Oedipus 511
oikoumenē 457
Olbia 443, 454
Old Oligarch 150
Old Testament 388
Olen 510
Olympia 190
Olympic games 565–6
omens 188, 194–6, 570–1
Onomacritus 559
Opis 487
opsis: *see* autopsy
oracles 121–2, 188, 191, 194–6, 358, 571, 574; *see also* Delphi
oral poetry 451
oral tradition 100, 277, 399; East Greek traditions 523; family traditions 525, 532, 534–6, 540, 545, 573–4; Panhellenic traditions 522, 542, 545, 547; *polis* traditions, popular and official 522, 525–8, 531–2, 534–48; *see also* Herodotus, use of oral tradition; orality

orality 5, 53, 107, 114; *see also* spoken language
Orestes, Bones of 515
origins 324–8, 449, 451
Oroetes 557
Orphics 434
Ossetes 451
ostraka, ostracism 547–8
'Other', 'othering' 238–41, 363–71, 415, 417, 435, 481

Padaei 461–2
Pan 379, 381–2, 500
Panaetius of Tenos 562
paratactic style 5, 251, 253–4; *see also lexis eiromenē*
parenthetical remarks 285
Paros 340, 347, 379–80
Parysatis 495
Pausanias, author 508, 516
Pausanias, regent of Sparta 342, 369–70, 553–4, 567
Payen, P. 363
Pazyryk 450–1
Pedasus 551
Peisistratus, Peisistratids 37–8, 211, 501, 504, 513–15, 525, 543, 559
Pelasgians 196, 325–6, 328, 431, 504
Peloponnesian war 4, 149, 153, 166, 169–71, 176, 343, 384, 404
Pembroke, S. 237–8
Periander 112, 127, 206, 368, 503, 516, 525, 544
Pericles 166, 170, 553, 567
Persepolis 576, 580, 589–90
Perseus 326–7, 497
Persia, Persian(s) 325, 327, 332–6, 344–8, 362, 365–6, 502, 508, 512–13, 518–20; army, size of 334; customs and attitudes 566, 569–70, 575; defeat of 563, 565–6; empire 500, 554–7; engineering 563–4; government 577; kings 569–70; religious policy 577, 579–90; royal buildings 580, 582; inscriptions 482, 484, 493, 588–90
Persian wars 518–20, 551–78
Peter the Great 452
Pheidon of Argos 517, 519
Pheros 422–4, 426
Philaids 545
Philippides 381
philosophy, Ionian 156–9
Phocaea, Phocaeans 339, 471
Phocis 566
Phoenicia, Phoenicians 269–70, 324–6
Phrygia, Phrygians 326
Phrynichus 510
phthonos 193–94
Phylakos 188, 189
physis 160–1, 163, 185; *see also nomos*
pilots 420, 428
Pindar 367, 383, 385, 418, 446, 507, 510
Pisistratus 189, 400
Pittacus 513
Plataea 548
Plataea, battle of 191, 370, 561–3, 565–7
Platea 507
Plato 151
pleonexia 341, 347
Plutarch 275, 282, 327, 512, 515, 571
poetic language 100–3
Pohlenz, M. 248–50
poikilia 246
polarity 155, 363–71
political thought 150, 164–83, 183
Polybius 443
Polycrates 110, 124–6, 157, 170, 193, 196, 211–3, 282, 339–40, 407–8, 424, 426, 434, 499, 503, 517, 524–8, 557
polyvocalism 276
Poseidon 188, 190–1, 193, 450
poverty 336, 342, 566; *see also* luxury
power 151–2, 160; *see also kratos*
praise 282
Prakken, D. W. 391
presentation through negation 375
Prexaspes 131
priests 424, 427, 497, 499
probability 279, 281; *see also* Herodotus as a critic
progressive style 84
Promeneia 374
proof 9, 11, 20–1; *see also* Herodotus as a critic
prophasis 346
prophecies 559
prose 10–11, 97, 180–1
proskhēma 346
proskynesis 577; *see also* Persia, customs
prostitution, sacred 479, 481, 494, 496
Protagoras 161

Protesilaus 115–16, 189, 193, 409, 553
Proteus 422, 424
prōtos heuretēs 155
Psammenitus 426
Psammetichus 332, 423–4, 428
Psammis 332, 423–4
Psyttaleia 572–3
Pygmies 467
Pythagoras 157
Pythios 584

Quellenforschung 373, 377

Raaflaub, K. 165, 538
rape 497, 553
razor's edge metaphor 101–2
reciprocity 209–12, 439, 509, 522
records, 323–4; *see thōmata*
register 273, 284
relativism: *see nomos, physis*
reliability: *see* Herodotus, reliability of
religion: *see* Herodotus, religion in
resources 557, 563, 568
retaliation: *see* revenge, reciprocity
revenge 121, 209–12, 214–17, 323, 346–8, 555
Rhampsinitus 424, 427
rhetoric 7, 9, 160, 286
Rhodopis 510
Rhoikos' temple 503
ring composition 71–3, 104–5, 260–1, 377
Risch, E. 107
Romm, J. 356, 360
Rossellini, M. 239–40, 460, 462–4
Royal Scyths 440
'rule': *see arkhē*, imperialism, *hēgemonia*
Russo, J. 21

Sabacos 423
Sacae 440
Sahara 465, 468
Saïd, S. 239–40, 460, 462–4
Salamis, battle of 188, 191, 502, 561–2, 564–6, 568–9, 571–3, 576–7, 579, 584
Samos, Samians 267, 333, 376, 499, 502–3, 507, 516–18, 524–8, 531, 556
Sandanis 553, 556
Sappho 510
Sardinia 341, 466, 557
Sardis 346, 510
savages 460–74; *see also* 'Other'
school 502
scorched-earth tactics 335, 448
Scylax 465, 470
Scyles 192, 446, 455
Scyllias 359–60, 504–5
Scythia, Scythians 15, 17, 182, 323, 331, 336, 361, 403–5, 437–56, 461–5, 472–3, 511, 554–5; Scythian archers 446–7
Semiramis 477, 496
Serpent Column 511–12
sesame 477, 480, 493
Sesostris, conquests of 331–2, 337, 422–4, 429, 439 n. 5, 511
Sestos 347–8, 511
Sethos 421, 423–4, 427
shamans 450
Shammuramat 496
sheep, fat-tailed 469
short stories 584–6; analogy in 305–15, content of 294; definition of 291–9; incremental triple in 297; meaning of 306–15; narrative art of 292–4; narrative modes of 299; organization and placement of 302–4; patterns in 294–6, 299–302; terms for 291; thematic relevance of 304–6; transmission and truth of 315–17; *see also* novella, *logos*
Shrimpton, G. S. 378, 380
Sicinnus 568
siege warfare 565
Sigeion 510
Sigynnae 472
Simonides 370, 510
Sindians 439
Siphnos 527–8
Sippar 483–4, 487
Siris 568
slaves, slavery 336, 347, 446–7, 494, 573
Small, J. 362–3
Smerdis 488
snakes 469
Socles 516, 544–5
Solon 168–69, 351–2, 357, 369, 501, 510, 513–14
Sophanes of Decelea 562
sophists, sophistic 7, 153–4, 156, 160–2, 280
Sophocles 369
Sostratos 499
Sourvinou-Inwood, C. 112–14

Sparta, Spartan(s) 385, 428, 433, 497, 500, 502–4, 508, 511, 515–16, 526–8, 531–3, 543–8; customs 325, 368; kings 326–7, 501, 519, 545–6; power of 338, 340; role of, in Persian wars 341–2, 347, 566–7, 575
Spartan-Athenian hostility 566–8
spatium historicum, spatium mythicum 110, 270, 287, 389–92, 395, 405–11; *see also* chronology
speeches 101, 104, 106, 375, 384
spoken language 53–77; *see also* 'chunking', theme, 'tail'
Stahl, M. 112
Stambler, S. 106
Stoa Poikile 573
storms 561, 570
story-patterns 232–3; *see also* short stories
Strabo 460, 479
Strasburger, H. 106, 392–3, 395, 408
Syloson 345, 503, 556
synchronism 392, 398–400, 409; *see also* Herodotus, synchronisms in
Syracuse 341

ta legomena 356, 499, 502, 505
Table of the Sun 467
'tail', in sentence structure 54, 56–9, 64–9
Talthybius 114–16
Tartessos 339, 507
Tauri 439, 440 n. 10
taxation 484, 493–4
Tegea 338, 497, 512, 515
Teisamenus, Bones of 516
Tenos 511
textuality 54–5
thalassocracy 333, 337–40, 499
Thales 156, 325
Thar desert 465
Thasos 340
Thebes, Egyptian 475
Thebes, Thebans 347, 511, 569
theme, in sentence structure 54, 56, 65
Themistocles 43–8, 188, 193–94, 282, 519, 547, 561, 563, 567–9, 571, 574–5
Themistocles Decree 573
theogony, Greek 500
Theopompus 474
Thera 383, 506–8
Thermopylae, battle of 510–11, 561–2, 565, 576, 584
Thersander 351, 374, 376–7
Thomas, R. 9–11, 13–15, 20, 163–4, 354, 384, 478–9, 535–6
thōmata 282, 323–4, 359–60, 365, 418, 428, 430, 432, 434, 479, 551, 561, 578; *see also erga*
Thonis 422
Thrace, Thracians 333, 335, 439, 461, 463, 471
Thrasybulus 544
Thucydides 4, 31–32, 79–82, 117, 149–54, 169, 175, 179, 181–86, 226–7, 281, 268, 288, 322–3, 338–40, 343, 349, 370, 375–7, 379–80, 384, 386, 390, 397, 408, 513, 535, 543, 547–8, 551, 558, 575
Tigris 477, 485
Timarete 374
time 27, 29, 252–3, 387–412; *see also* chronology
Tolstaya Mogila 452–3
topic 54, 56, 58, 60–1, 67, 74; *see also* discourse topic
topography 573
Tourraix, A. 232–4, 238
trade, traders 324, 336, 366, 441, 446, 499
tragic themes/motifs 119–24
tribute (*phoros*) 330–4, 337
Troglodytes 462, 467
Troy, Trojan War 108, 114–15, 323, 337, 339, 345, 389, 395, 403, 408–11, 499–500, 553
tumuli: *see* burial mounds
Tymnes 374, 454
tyrants, tyranny 173–7, 274, 337–8, 385, 585–6, 513–15, 518–19, 524–6, 529, 535–45
tyrant-slayers 326
Tyrtaeus 508, 510

unity, importance of, among Greeks 335, 340–3, 463, 566–9, 571–2
Uruk 483

variant versions 270, 275
Vernant, J.-P. 112–14
Versnel, H. 116
Veyne, P. 356
voice 267–89; *see also* polyvocalism
Von Fritz, K. 392

war, causes of 343–8, 555–9; *see also* Herodotus, causation in
warfare 202–3, 324–5, 447–8
'warner' motif: *see* 'wise adviser'
Waters, K. 252
Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, U. von 165
William of Rubruck 448
'wise adviser' 119, 122–3, 171, 299–302, 351–2, 546, 553, 569–70, 584
Wolf, E. 230–2
women 183, 207–8, 225–42, 564, 585–6

Xanthippus 553, 567
xenia 209–11
Xenophanes 157
Xerxes 105, 161, 173, 174–75, 182, 187–89, 193–94, 196, 335, 341, 344, 347–8, 368–9, 403, 408, 475, 478, 488–90, 559, 569–70, 579–90

yurt 446

Zeus 188, 190–1, 197, 450, 475
ziggurat 480, 491–2, 496

INDEX OF PASSAGES

Aeschylus
Agamemnon 120, 128, 133
1295 123
1296–8 123
1318–19 121
Choephori 120, 133
273–4 131
555–9 131
556–7 121
888 121
930 121
Eumenides 136
453–4 123
700–3 449
Persae 131, 137–45
230–45 572
399–401 572
Prometheus Vinctus
707–35 445
790–807 445
Septem
743–52 133
Supplices 120, 133
F 198 Radt 449

Aristophanes
Birds
941–43 446
1660 514

Aristotle
Athenaion Politeia
7.4 514
9 514
12 514
13.1–2 514
16–17 515
Gen. An.
755b6 109
Poetics
1451a-b 98
1451b1–11 117
1451b34–5 126
1452a18–20 126
Politics
1313a 519
Problems
25.6 443

Arrian, *Anabasis*
2.25.4 469
7.20 474

Diodorus Siculus
10.25.1 187
11.24.1 575
11.29.1 190

Dionysius of Halicarn.
On Thucydides
23 97

Empedocles
DK B108 157

Ephorus
F 115 508

Gorgias
Helen
10–11 160

Hecataeus
FGrH 1 F 1 157, 399
FGrH 1 F 184–90 445

Hermogenes
Peri ideon
330–1 109
336 100–101
408 98, 103, 109

Herodotus
Histories
Book One
Proem: 3–32 *passim*, 93–4, 99–100, 202–3, 269–70, 282, 321, 395, 551, 583

1.1–5 18, 28, 114, 269–70, 287, 395, 398, 408, 553, 556
1.1–3 497, 499
1.1.1 7, 17, 324, 376
1.2.3 18
1.3.2 18
1.4.1 345
1.4.4 553
1.5–91 168–69, 172–74
1.5–33 35–6
1.5 86, 92, 322, 328, 345, 347, 357
1.5.3 18, 159, 177, 270, 281, 395, 411, 499
1.5.4 352
1.6 86
1.6.2 330
1.7 501
1.7.2 55–56
1.8–12 230–2, 293, 368
1.8.1 55–59
1.10.2 63
1.11.5 21
1.12 510
1.14.4–15.1 72
1.17.1–3 36
1.19–22 195
1.19–20 210
1.20 378
1.23–24 292–3, 298, 306–8
1.24 512
1.26.3 347
1.27 298, 300, 304, 335, 513, 556
1.27.1 330
1.28.3 36
1.29–33 201, 293, 300
1.29 513
1.30.1 22, 409
1.30.3 357
1.32 177, 369
1.34 174
1.35–45 134–5, 160, 195, 196, 205
1.44.2 66–67
1.45.1 76
1.45.3 76
1.46–92 136–7
1.46–56 188
1.46.1 554
1.49 513
1.51 279, 282, 511
1.51.4 370
1.52 64
1.56–68 567
1.56–64 37
1.56.1–2 16, 170
1.58 328, 337
1.59–68 502–3
1.59–64 211, 518
1.59 515
1.60 385
1.60.3–5 189
1.64.1 525
1.65–68 170, 338
1.65.1–2 195, 508
1.66 512
1.67 407
1.68.3 65–66, 161
1.71 171, 404, 553, 556
1.74 401
1.76.2 344
1.77.1 335
1.79–80 336
1.79 162
1.82 515
1.84 336
1.85–91 188, 219–20
1.91.4–6 195
1.92.1 554
1.93 282, 511
1.94.1 324–5
1.95 88, 486
1.95.1 274, 276, 441
1.95.2 331
1.96–100 173
1.101 330
1.103.1 325
1.103–106 437
1.105 449
1.105.4 442
1.106.1–2 331
1.107–130 110
1.108 554
1.110–13 208, 228
1.110.3 21
1.113.2 21
1.114 553
1.118–119 111
1.122.3 111
1.123–124 111
1.124 89
1.124.1 188
1.124.3 62
1.126.6 188
1.130 437, 555
1.130.3 344

1.131–132 197
1.131 157, 197
1.134.1 577
1.136 21
1.136.1 570
1.140 102, 362
1.140.1 499
1.143 397
1.143.1 333
1.143.2 337–9
1.146–147 327
1.153–160 381
1.153 572
1.153.1–2 324
1.155 162
1.155.4 336
1.157–160 121, 193
1.163 339
1.167.1–2 195
1.169 86
1.169.2 554
1.170 341, 466
1.170.3 325
1.171 408, 499
1.171.2–3 337
1.171.4 325
1.175 551
1.177–178.1 554
1.178–200 475, 477–8
1.181–183 197, 478
1.183 88, 479, 488–9, 579
1.184–185 228
1.184 25, 331
1.185–186 556
1.185 478–9
1.185.1 26, 554
1.186.1 26
1.187 478
1.191.6 333
1.194 479
1.196 228, 479
1.199 479
1.201–216 472
1.201–214 554
1.202 472
1.202.2 450
1.203 474
1.205–216 227
1.207 23, 25, 172, 177, 411
1.209.4 188
1.214.5 274
1.216 197, 461

Book Two

2.1 87, 555
2.2 407
2.3–4 158–59, 407
2.3 278, 402, 407, 431
2.3.1 376
2.3.2 198
2.4.1 273, 387, 401, 407
2.4.2 197, 402
2.5 159
2.11–12 157, 159, 401
2.12.1 358
2.14.2 429
2.15–17 160
2.15.1 20, 396, 401–2
2.16.1 20, 282
2.18.1–2 358–9
2.18.1 20
2.18.3 419–20
2.19–25 160, 282
2.19 278
2.20–23 354
2.20 282
2.22.2 359
2.23 109, 352, 457, 473
2.24.1 24, 282
2.29.1 15, 419
2.29.1–2 355
2.29.7 197
2.30.5 365
2.32.4 64
2.33–34 155
2.33 471
2.34.1 16, 282
2.35–36 155, 162, 181
2.35 227, 282, 448
2.35.1–2 365
2.35.1 418
2.35.2 433
2.37.5 427
2.42.2 22
2.43–44 197
2.43.1 274, 396
2.44 16, 278, 401, 407
2.45 109, 282, 407
2.46 431
2.46.4 22
2.48 432
2.49 195, 197, 401
2.50 196
2.50.1 354
2.52 196
2.53 157, 197, 401, 500
2.53.1 354

2.55.3 374
2.58 155, 197
2.60–63 432
2.65.2 198
2.68.2 282
2.70 88
2.77 162, 401
2.77.1 376
2.77.3 433
2.77.5 420
2.78 432
2.91 432
2.93 109
2.98.1 328
2.99–141 421–3, 425
2.99.1–2 355
2.99.1 15, 278, 419
2.101.1 25
2.101.2 26
2.104 88
2.110.1 26
2.116 108
2.119.3 16
2.100 406
2.100.3 429
2.102–110 331
2.102–6 511
2.103.2–105 332
2.104.2 420
2.107.1 422
2.110.2–3 332
2.111 426
2.113.3 422
2.114 193
2.116–117 355
2.117 275
2.119.3 355
2.120 156–58, 193, 215, 408, 426
2.120.5 356
2.122 427, 432
2.123 19, 88–90, 157, 376, 388, 419, 432
2.124–136 422
2.125 511
2.127.2 429
2.131 279, 283
2.133.1 421
2.133.3 431
2.134 282
2.135 510
2.136 26, 511
2.139 122, 426
2.141 426, 511
2.141.1 421
2.141.3–4 421, 430
2.142 396, 398, 402, 406, 410, 501
2.143 267, 279, 327, 396, 401, 497, 510
2.144.2 421
2.145–146 197
2.145 407, 500
2.147–3.64 423–5
2.147–51 122
2.147.1 419
2.148 503
2.148.2 25
2.152.3 421
2.154 401, 406
2.154.4 419, 499
2.156 510
2.158 429
2.161.2 426
2.161.3 192
2.161.4 525
2.162.2 421
2.164.1 420
2.167 385
2.169 426
2.172.5 420
2.177 397, 513
2.178–179 430
2.182 91
2.182.2 332

Book Three

3.1 87
3.1.1 61
3.3 274
3.6 430
3.9 90–1
3.9.2 505
3.12 161
3.13.4 334
3.14 301, 426
3.16.2 193
3.16.3 197
3.17–25 466–7
3.21 405, 464
3.21.2–3 556
3.25–26 554
3.25 193, 335, 466
3.27–30 193
3.34.4 333
3.37.1 193
3.38 366, 385, 459, 461, 510

3.39–60 113, 124–6, 211, 409, 524–8
3.39–43 296, 426–7
3.40 89
3.44–53 206
3.44–45 524
3.45 157, 212, 282
3.46–56 526–7
3.46 526
3.47 212
3.47.1 508
3.48–53 112, 127, 516
3.49.1 502
3.55 374, 399, 500, 502
3.55.2 527
3.56 503
3.57–59 527
3.58 408
3.60 275, 282, 503
3.61–66 130–1
3.65.5 193
3.72 160, 161
3.80–82 161, 173, 185, 279, 325, 327, 374, 528, 534, 544–5
3.80 211
3.82.5 569
3.84–87 518–19
3.88 511
3.89–95 333–4
3.89 366
3.90–97 555
3.94 470
3.95 333
3.98–106 470
3.99 461
3.100 470
3.101 470
3.102 465
3.103 88
3.106 162
3.107–113 468–9
3.108 160
3.109 469
3.113 469
3.115 470–2
3.116 445, 472
3.117 333
3.119 120, 301–2
3.120–149 556
3.120–125 124–6, 203–4, 211, 296
3.120 212–3
3.120.1 503
3.122 110, 170, 407
3.122.2–3 339–40, 499
3.124–125 195, 196
3.125 213
3.130.3 22
3.131–138 344–5
3.133 311
3.134.1 22
3.134.2–4 335
3.138.3–4 345–6
3.139 503
3.142 165, 184, 190
3.148 212
3.151.2 123
3.166 465

Book Four

4.1–144 437–56
4.1.1 439
4.1.2 437, 440
4.4 437
4.5–13 441
4.5 403, 404
4.5.3 449
4.8 457
4.8.2 20
4.13 465, 472
4.13.1 361, 444–5
4.15.1–2 361
4.16–21 439
4.16.1 361, 444
4.17–27 441
4.17.1 443, 446
4.17.2 440, 449
4.18.1 440, 449
4.19 440
4.20.1–2 440, 445
4.22.3 440
4.24 441
4.25–36 472–3
4.26 197, 461, 464
4.27 465, 472
4.28–30 83
4.28–29 443
4.30.1 83
4.35 510
4.36–45 457
4.36 155, 157, 282, 457
4.44 470
4.45 471
4.46 182, 403
4.46.1 376
4.46.2–3 335, 448, 454
4.47–58 439, 441
4.48 471

4.56–57 440
4.59 450, 461
4.59.1 440
4.60–2 450
4.67 449
4.70–72 452–3
4.71.1–2 440
4.73–75 450
4.76.6 374
4.77 279, 444
4.78.1 446
4.78.3 443
4.79.1 192
4.79.2 195, 443
4.81 442
4.81.1 17, 28, 440
4.82 282
4.83–144 554–5
4.84 206
4.87 379, 511
4.88 511
4.91 511
4.95.1 60–61, 157
4.99–117 441
4.99–101 439
4.106 367
4.108 440, 446, 454
4.110–117 227, 453
4.118 437
4.131–132 455
4.136 87
4.137–139 87
4.145–159 383
4.145–149 497
4.145.1 506
4.150–156 506–8
4.152 512, 517
4.152.3 499
4.155–157 195
4.160–162 228
4.161 195
4.163–164 122, 517
4.173–174 284–5, 403
4.174 464
4.178 403
4.180 459
4.180.4 325
4.181–196 468
4.183 281–2
4.184 464
4.189 459
4.189.3 325
4.191 403, 464
4.192.3 16, 282
4.195 89
4.195.2 505
4.197 282, 404
4.197.2 555
4.202–205 214–5, 228

Book Five

5.1 403
5.3–10 471–2
5.3 463
5.3.1 335
5.5 474
5.7 197
5.9.3 395, 396, 403, 412
5.10 471
5.12–14 556
5.12–13 67–71, 403
5.12.1 71
5.13 403
5.14.1 71
5.17–18 285
5.18–20 297
5.18 106
5.25–26 73–76
5.28–38 346
5.28–30 170
5.28 339, 502
5.30–36 557
5.30–31 530
5.31.1–3 344
5.33.2 192
5.35.3 530
5.36 510
5.36.2–3 339
5.37 185, 530
5.38–97 567
5.39–54 531–3
5.39 515
5.42.1 547
5.45 91–2
5.49 157, 347, 532
5.49.8 338, 508
5.50 533
5.51.2 533
5.55–96 249, 263–6
5.55–78 38–40, 170
5.55–56 196
5.57.1 326
5.58 80
5.59–61 511
5.62 274
5.63–65 535–6
5.63 385
5.63.2 193, 369

5.66–73 539–42
5.66–67 211
5.66.1 536
5.67–68 504, 517, 518
5.67 400
5.69–73 211
5.69.1 338
5.69.2 542
5.71 504
5.73 382
5.74–78 541
5.74–75 193
5.76 38
5.77 38–9, 511
5.78 161, 337, 385, 518, 537
5.82–89 503, 517
5.82–84 497
5.90.1 193
5.91 39
5.91.1 543
5.91.2 193, 543
5.92 173, 186, 192, 516, 544
5.92α2 40
5.92β 127, 210
5.92β–γ 518
5.92.δ.1 192
5.92.ζ.1 501
5.92η.2–3 368, 525
5.95 204
5.97 202, 346–7, 385, 533–4, 557
5.98 530
5.99 384
5.99.1 509
5.101–102.1 187
5.102 346
5.102.3 510
5.105 187, 557, 572
5.106–107 531, 557
5.113 510
5.114 195
5.114.2 497
5.125 510

Book Six
6.2.1 557
6.11.2 102
6.11.3 192
6.14 89, 511
6.14.2–3 531
6.15–16 531
6.19.3 187
6.21.2 510
6.22.1 531
6.25 187
6.27 195, 502
6.32 187
6.33–41 211, 545
6.43 374, 530
6.43.3 279
6.43.4 62, 161, 185
6.44.1 344
6.52–53 504
6.53–55 326–7
6.53 89, 274, 497
6.56–60 515, 519
6.61.1 546
6.62 311
6.63–69 111
6.64.1 126
6.66–70 546
6.67.3 107
6.69.4 497
6.72 200
6.74–75 547
6.75.3 193
6.76.1 195
6.79–80 193
6.79.1 61
6.80 195
6.82.1–2 357
6.84.3 357
6.85–93 547
6.85–86 199
6.86 193
6.91 193
6.95 510
6.96 187
6.98 166, 410
6.98.2 341
6.101.3 187
6.103–104 211
6.105–106 381–2
6.105 109
6.108 548
6.109–110 518
6.109.3 567
6.109.5 192
6.115 573
6.121–131 40–2, 211, 504, 573
6.121 547
6.123 535
6.126–130 211, 517
6.126–127 502
6.127.3 65
6.131.1 538

6.132–136 195, 379–80
6.132–133 347
6.135.3 192
6.136 510
6.137 504

Book Seven
Bks 7–8 137–45
7.1–2 579
7.3 580
7.5–18 174–76, 344
7.5–9 220–1
7.6.4 192
7.8–11 569
7.8 587
7.8α.1 554
7.8.β 187
7.9β 171
7.9.2 344
7.10 156
7.10.1 23
7.10δ.2 161
7.10ε 160
7.10θ3 102
7.12–18 103, 195
7.13 570
7.14.1 531
7.16 221–2
7.16α.1 570
7.16β 157
7.18 584, 587–8
7.20 403, 408
7.20.2–21.1 323, 334, 336, 437, 499
7.24 26
7.27–29 206, 299
7.28.1 101
7.30 511
7.33–37 563
7.34–35 194
7.35 576
7.37 196
7.38–39 206, 299
7.39.3 576
7.43.2 561
7.45 587
7.47.2 335
7.49 335
7.49.1 570
7.57–58 196
7.58.2 560
7.59.1 565
7.60 513
7.61–99 103, 555, 560
7.64.2 440
7.89.3 428
7.96.2 562
7.99.1 368
7.102–104 161, 163, 182, 300, 398, 405, 566
7.102 518
7.102.1 342
7.104 518
7.111 397
7.113.1–137.1 121
7.114 580, 585
7.120 563
7.125 560
7.128–130 560
7.129 110
7.132.2 191
7.133–136 565
7.133–134 114–15
7.135 184, 185
7.136 352
7.136.1 577
7.137 93, 114–15, 398, 404
7.138–139 42
7.139–144 191, 195
7.139 382, 574–5
7.139.1 23, 167
7.139.3–4 568–9
7.139.5 188–89
7.140.3 187
7.143–144 44–5
7.144 547, 568, 574
7.145 171
7.147 446
7.147.2–3 564
7.148–149 191, 341
7.148 546
7.152.3 19, 110, 274, 356, 367, 370, 376, 419, 505
7.153 548
7.158–162 341–2
7.159 101
7.163–164 211
7.166 98, 398, 575
7.166.1 502
7.168.3 571
7.169–171 191, 499
7.178 103, 190, 191, 574
7.184–187 334
7.187 105
7.187.2 566
7.189 190, 191
7.190 296
7.191 560

7.192 190
7.193 560
7.197 560
7.204 410, 500
7.209 300, 398
7.209.1 566
7.209.4 575
7.210.2 566
7.213–214 561
7.214 89
7.220.3–4 191
7.224.1 562
7.225–226 561–2
7.225 108
7.226.2 26
7.228 123, 510–11
7.235–237 300, 568
7.235 515, 546
7.238 216–7
7.239 303, 305, 546, 563

Book Eight
Bks 7–8 137–45
8.2–3 42–3, 202
8.3 167, 171, 185, 342, 574
8.4–5 569
8.8 110, 279, 359–60, 504–5
8.11.3 562
8.13 192, 561
8.15 575
8.19 568
8.22 511, 568
8.26 566
8.26.3 348
8.30 566
8.32.2–33 187
8.35–39 187, 191, 571
8.35.2 21
8.36–37 379
8.46.4 562
8.49 567–8
8.51 395, 398
8.51.1 334, 501
8.53.1 193
8.53.2 187
8.54–55 561
8.55 187
8.56–57 45–6
8.58–63 46
8.59 563
8.60γ 561
8.62–63 568
8.62 46
8.62.1 575
8.64 195
8.65 195, 561
8.68 568, 570
8.70.2 567–8
8.74–75 568
8.74 567–8
8.77.1–2 358
8.78–79 46–7, 216–7
8.79 519, 574
8.82 511
8.82.1 562
8.84 564
8.85.2–3 562
8.86 566
8.89 565
8.91 24
8.94 564, 574
8.99–100 570
8.101.2 25
8.103–107 206, 215, 297, 303, 308–10
8.103 570
8.104 551
8.108–110 47
8.109–112 204, 224
8.109 224
8.109.3 188, 194, 369, 407, 561
8.111–112 47
8.114 191, 196
8.114.2 123
8.118 295
8.121–122 191
8.124 282
8.128 274
8.129 193, 561
8.131 410, 500
8.133–135 571
8.135.1 274
8.136 571
8.136.2–3 575
8.140–144 301, 571
8.143–144 43, 566
8.143.2 188
8.144 167, 347

Book Nine
9.2 569
9.3 395, 569–70
9.5–9 566–7
9.13.2 187

9.14 333
9.16 123, 178, 274, 302, 374, 398
9.16.5 351
9.19 570
9.21 565
9.26 408, 497
9.33–35 191
9.36–38 195, 196
9.40 25
9.41–43 196
9.41.4 570
9.42.1 351
9.46–47 565
9.53 565
9.61.3–62.1 570–1
9.62.3 566
9.63.2 565
9.65 561
9.65.2 189
9.67 25
9.68 565
9.70.2 565
9.71.2 562
9.71.3 24
9.72 563
9.72.2 27 n. 56
9.73 93
9.74 562
9.76 567
9.78–79 300, 314
9.78 567
9.81.1 190, 191
9.82 377, 554, 567
9.83 161
9.84 275
9.85 562
9.87–88 347
9.100 561
9.100.2 575
9.102.2 567
9.104–122 48–9
9.104 557
9.108–114 230–2, 368, 577, 580
9.109 192, 587
9.113–115 310–13
9.114–122 216–17
9.116–20 115, 189, 193, 297, 313–14, 409, 553
9.120–122 87
9.120 347–8
9.121 303, 314–15
9.122 49, 162, 188, 336, 520, 553

Hesiod
Catalogue of Women
F 150.15 444
F 151 444

Theogony
27 360
38 389
209 194

Works and Days
106–201 389

Hippias
DK B17 160

Hippocrates
Airs, Waters, Places
12 162
16 162
17–22 445
17 453
19.2–4 443
21.3 447
22 449
24 162

De Arte
1 9

On Ancient Medicine
20 13

Homer
Iliad
1.1 6–7, 100
1.4–5 102
1.245–6 107
1.423 467 n. 13
2.1–40 103
2.485 389
2.488 28
2.494–760 103
2.695–709 115
6.356–8 99, 388
3.3 ff. 467 n. 14
7.91 99, 389
7.125 101
10.173 101
12.447 388–9
13.5 f. 444
18.501 16
22.304–5 27

Odyssey
1.1 100

1.22 ff. 466–7
4.85 443
4.350 101
4.710 99
9.105–15 405
11.14–19 440
12.389–90 106
17.462–5 106
23.67 194

Longinus, *On the Sublime*
13.3 98

Megasthenes
F 21 469 n. 17
F 23 474
F 27b 474

Nearchus
F 8 474

New Testament
Matthew
14,1–12 585

Old Testament
Isaiah
5.26–8 447

Ovid
Epistulae ex Ponto
1.3.53 443

Pausanias
2.24.7 508
3.2.6–7 508
7.1.7–8 516
8.39.3–5 508

Pindar
Pythian 5 507

Plato
Hipp. Min.
363c-d 84
Protagoras
321b 160
Phaedo
96a 13
Phaedrus
278d 84
Republic
359c6–360b2 133
Laws
694d 579

Plutarch
Arist.
19–21 190
De Herodoti Malignitate
856C 275
870c 512
13–15 327
23 327
Moralia
785b 117
Pericles
36 160
Themistocles
14.2 571
24 571
32 571

SEG
36.694 443 n. 20
40.611 443 n. 20

Simonides
11W 370
11.13–28W 103–4, 108

Sophocles
Ajax
Integral 122
1028–37 125
Antigone
Integral 122
Electra
Integral 127
Oedipus Rex
Integral 122, 135
Trachiniae 117, 130, 135

Theognis
22–31 31

Thucydides
1.1 4, 81, 149, 396
1.1–20 384

1.1–8 338–9
1.2–19 390, 408
1.3.1 338
1.8.4–11.2 339
1.13.2–5 339
1.13.6–14.1 339
1.15 384
1.21–22 31–2, 79, 81, 150, 179, 268, 322, 375, 397
1.38 113
1.49 558
1.69.5 577
1.70–71 151
1.76 151
1.88 543
1.97.2 375
1.130.1 567
1.132.2 370
2.2 396
2.5.6 377
2.8 167
2.47–53 151
2.48.3 386
2.63 166
2.67 398
2.71–74 190
2.79 441
3.45 151
3.68.5 548
3.81–84 151
4.104–8 149
4.122.6 377
5.26.5 149
5.84–114 151
5.89 152
6.54–9 535

Xanthus,
FgrHist 90, 44 11–47 133

Xenophanes
DK A33.5 157
DK B11–16 157
DK B22 399–400

Xenophon
Hellenica
5.1.4 324

Persian Royal Inscriptions
DB 488, 493, 581, 589
DNb 589 n. 5
XPf 30–2 579
XPh 589 n. 5
XPl 581, 589